

Back from the Brink

Toward Restraint and Dialogue
between Russia and the West



Third Report of the Deep Cuts Commission

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between Russia and the West**

June 2016

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Foreword

Russia and the West are on the brink of a renewed confrontation. Driven by mutual perceptions of insecurity, both NATO and Russia are ramping up their defenses along the Baltic fault line. Some of these increased military activities are inherently dangerous. If not managed properly, close military encounters in adjoining airspaces and on the neighboring seas risk unintended escalation, possibly up to the nuclear level.

One of the last remaining pillars of mutual restraint, the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, is subject to heated compliance disputes. At the same time, Washington and Moscow are heavily investing in new and redundant nuclear systems.

The renewed confrontation and the lack of communication might bring back the kind of harrowing crises we had during the Cold War.

The good news is that there are still areas of cooperation in the pursuit of common interests, such as the Iran nuclear deal, the talks on Syria, and the smooth implementation of the New START agreement. Washington and Moscow continue to show interest in maintaining what they define as 'strategic stability' – that is, the mutual confidence that neither side is upsetting the nuclear balance. As much as this concept falls short of President Obama's vision of a world free from nuclear weapons, it still constitutes the most basic pre-condition for dialogue and restraint.

Today, dialogue and restraint are needed more than ever since the end of the Cold War. In order to prevent misperceptions, miscalculations, and the potential return of a costly arms race, both Washington and Moscow have to rediscover the instruments of diplomatic dialogue, military-to-military exchanges, and verifiable arms control.

As much as the proponents of enhanced deterrence are currently dominating the debate, a crucial lesson from the Cold War is that deterrence needs to go hand-in-hand with arms control. Addressing the mutual build-up of arms in the Baltic area, resolving the on-going INF Treaty compliance crisis, and discussing the challenges to further nuclear cuts are thus paramount tasks for the coming years.

Without restraint and dialogue the next generation will inherit again a dangerous and costly adversarial relationship, permanently on the brink of possible disaster.

This report contains a number of bold proposals on how to better manage relations between the West and Russia in order to avert worst-case scenarios. Specifying that cooperative solutions are possible without giving up on the fundamental interests of each side, it warrants a close look by officials in both Moscow and Washington.



William J. Perry

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Introduction

When the *Deep Cuts Commission* began its work in 2013, its primary purpose was to identify the main obstacles that prevent further reductions of nuclear arms, and to consider solutions that could pave the way to achieve deeper cuts and to strengthen nuclear nonproliferation.

Today, this goal is more remote than three years ago. The political landscape has changed dramatically. Relations between Russia and the West deteriorated over the Ukraine crisis and have reached a level of mutual mistrust that blocks further progress in nuclear disarmament as in many other areas.

Both Russia and the United States prioritize deterrence over cooperative security and are engaged in expensive programs to modernize their nuclear forces. Ambitious proposals for either nuclear or conventional arms control are off the table until better times. Some existing arms control instruments, such as the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, are subject to compliance disputes.

Against this background, any military incidents at sea or in the air resulting from increasingly provocative military activities raise growing concerns that they will lead to unintended escalation.

At the same time, Russia and Western countries have also worked together constructively in negotiating and implementing the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, more formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which constitutes an important milestone in nuclear nonproliferation and contributes to regional security.

Equally important, the implementation in good faith of the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) by both the United States and Russia clearly shows the benefits of arms control particularly in turbulent times. As long

as their nuclear modernization programs remain within the limits established by the treaty, the nuclear balance will remain predictable and stable.

The question is, of course, what happens when the New START agreement expires in 2021. Would the United States and Russia extend it for the up to five year period as provided for by the treaty? Would they maintain the existing level of mutually verifiable transparency beyond the treaty's lifetime until a new negotiated instrument is in place? Or would the political climate make any efforts to preserve the remaining pillars of transparency and stability impossible?

In order to avoid further exacerbation of the situation and prepare new ground for cooperative solutions, the most urgent task today is for Russia and NATO member states to **exercise restraint** in their military activities and deployments and **resume dialogue** on confidence-building and arms control.

A potential security crisis in Europe's northeast is looming.

In response to the crisis in and around Ukraine, allies have agreed to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defense profile in northeastern Europe. In Moscow's view, NATO's past and current policies have amplified the threat to Russia's core interests. As a result, both sides have increased the scope and intensity of their military activities in the immediate proximity of their mutual borders. The Baltic area has become a hotspot of such activities. While NATO's easternmost members perceive a threat to their sovereignty emanating from Russia, Moscow dismisses such concerns as ungrounded and points to its own complaints about NATO. The upcoming NATO Summit in Warsaw will take decisions on NATO's deterrence and defense commitments. Depending on its outcome and the Russian reactions to it, Europe may see regional security further deteriorate.

Close military encounters increase the risk of unintended escalation.

NATO and Russia should seek avenues to limit the dangers arising from potential military incidents, particularly in the Baltic and Black Sea areas. It is supremely important to prevent any escalation of such incidents because the end result could be nuclear use. In order to minimize the risk of such unintended escalation, the sides should explore the possibility of enhancing the utility of risk reduction centers. Even though the existing U.S.-Russian Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers are not fit for managing a potential nuclear crisis, their role as continuous communication channels should be expanded.

The INF Treaty is in danger.

A collapse of the INF Treaty could have grave negative security consequences for the whole of Europe and beyond. Even if Russia and the United States continue declaring their adherence to the treaty, unresolved compliance issues could further reduce prospects of future arms control negotiations between the United States and Russia. Moscow and Washington should thus seek ways to intensify the bilateral dialogue on ways to strengthen the treaty's implementation. In addition, both should seek ways to address the risks to stability associated with cruise missiles – particularly those that are nuclear-armed.

New START could come under pressure.

Thus far, the New START agreement is being implemented, and both sides are expected to meet the treaty's limits in 2018. Both appear to continue to value the treaty as an anchor of stability and mutual restraint. However, things could look different by 2021 when the treaty expires, or even before, particularly if the INF crisis lingers on.

The United States and Russia are modernizing their nuclear forces.

Given the likely technical and financial challenges confronting the United States and Russia in meeting their ambitious modernization plans over the coming decade, they could find mutual advantage in limiting deployed strategic forces, as a next step, for example to 500 deployed strategic delivery vehicles and 1,000 deployed strategic warheads during the next decade. Both should pay attention to each others' concerns and exercise restraint where possible.

Restraint and dialogue are key elements of conflict management.

In the current European context they remain underutilized. This has to change. By returning to arms control and confidence-building measures, the sides could work toward a more stable and secure relationship. There is still time and opportunity to de-escalate. As much as the challenges of the short- to medium-term are troubling, there are also opportunities for exercising restraint and resuming dialogue.

A parallel tracks policy could strengthen defense and dialogue.

Strengthened defense and the willingness to engage in dialogue can go hand-in-hand. The post-Warsaw Summit period presents a chance for a serious discussion on mutual restraint. A number of options exist to prevent the security crisis from deepening. Russia and NATO should discuss measures to avoid further reciprocal surging in their military activities, particularly in the Baltic area. Regionally tailored arms control and transparency measures could become important instruments of constraining and reducing such activities in a transparent and predictable manner.

The OSCE offers venues for dialogue.

This year, Germany holds the Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and sees the goal of re-opening dialogue as an important priority of its Chairmanship. Beyond the politically more narrow NATO-Russia Council, the OSCE is for the time being the single multilateral platform on which dialogue on relevant security concerns can and should be resumed without delay. The need to discuss all relevant concerns may include, inter alia, strengthening the Open Skies regime and engaging on the difficult issues of “hybrid” warfare and common security principles.

Strategic offense and defense are interlinked.

Russia has voiced its concern about U.S. missile defense programs and long-range conventional precision-guided munitions for a long time. Any effort to pursue negotiations on further nuclear arms reductions may have to proceed in parallel with a dialogue on these related issues. Russia and the United States could discuss matters in separate fora, but under a unified umbrella on strategic stability, in order to be able to move on different tracks at different speeds.

This report advocates a number of policy approaches for exercising restraint and reviving dialogue. It gives concrete recommendations on the following issues of pressing concern: (1) managing security concerns, particularly in the Baltic area; (2) minimizing the risks of dangerous military incidents, particularly those that could lead to nuclear escalation; (3) strengthening the role of the OSCE as a forum for security dialogue; (4) appropriately addressing INF Treaty compliance concerns and the effects of nuclear-armed cruise missile proliferation; (5) exploring options for a New START follow-on; (6) discussing issues of concern on strategic stability; and (7) avoiding misperceptions about U.S. and Russian nuclear modernizations.

Hamburg, Moscow, Washington
June 2016



Executive Summary

Relations between Russia and the West have fallen to an historic low. Even though both sides cooperate on certain issues, as in the case of reaching agreement with Iran over its nuclear program, hopes for sustained and comprehensive cooperation have dimmed significantly. Competition and selective cooperation is the new normal. It will likely remain so for some time.

As with all conflict-ridden relationships, mutual (mis)perceptions and comparatively minor incidents can cause major unintended negative consequences. The prime objective for the next few years should be limiting the potential for dangerous military incidents that can escalate out of control.

Russia and NATO must come back from the brink. They need to better manage their conflictual relationship. Restraint and dialogue are now needed more than ever.

- In order to ***reduce current security concerns in the Baltic area***, NATO and Russia should initiate a dialogue on possible mutual restraint measures. All states should ***adhere to the NATO-Russia Founding Act***. A NATO-Russia dialogue should aim at increasing the security of all states in the Baltic area by encompassing reciprocal and verifiable commitments. ***A sub-regional arms control regime*** could consist of interlocking elements such as restraint commitments, limitations, confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), and a sub-regional Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism.
- In light of the increasing dangers of military incidents between Russia, the United States and other NATO member states, the United States and Russia should ***revive a dialogue on nuclear risk reduction measures***, capable of addressing risks posed by different sorts of emergencies in near real-time. The United States and Russia could consider ***creating a Joint Military Incident Prevention and Communications Cell*** with a direct telephone link between the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Russian General Staff, and NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). Such a cell could be linked to or established in parallel with ***a new European Risk Reduction Center*** that would link the Russian General Staff and SHAPE.
- States Parties to the Treaty on Open Skies should ***pay more attention to the continued operation of Open Skies***. They should strengthen its operation by upgrading their observation capabilities.
- OSCE participating States should ***consider measures to give effect to the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs***. For this purpose, the OSCE could set up a commission which would carefully look into the issue from a legal point of view and explore possibilities

- for a new OSCE states-based mechanism. Beyond, OSCE participating States should **prepare for a long-term endeavor leading to a Helsinki-like conference** with the aim of reinvigorating and strengthening Europe's guiding security principles.
- The United States and Russia should **commit to attempting to resolve each other's compliance concerns with the INF Treaty by supplementing ongoing diplomatic dialogue with technical expertise**, either by convening the Special Verification Commission or a separate bilateral experts group mandated to appropriately address all relevant treaty-related compliance concerns. Further on, the United States and Russia should **address the issue of supplementing the treaty** by taking account of technological and political developments that have occurred since the treaty's entry into force.
 - The United States and Russia should **address the destabilizing effects of nuclear-armed cruise missile proliferation** by agreeing on specific confidence-building measures. Together with other nations, they should address the challenges of horizontal cruise missile proliferation by **reinforcing the relevant Missile Technology Control Regime's restrictions** and by **endorsing the inclusion of land-attack cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)/unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) in the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation**.
 - Moscow and Washington should **exercise restraint in Russian and U.S. nuclear force modernization programs**, remaining within the New START limits and acting consistent with the intent of the treaty. The United States should forego development of the LRSO, and Russia should reciprocate by phasing-out of its new nuclear-armed ALCMs. Russia and the United States should **work towards early discussions on a possible follow-on strategic arms reduction treaty**. They should be able to envision reductions to a level of 500 deployed strategic delivery vehicles and 1,000 deployed strategic warheads during the next decade. These discussions should explore options for exchanging measures of reciprocal restraint and **seek to address other issues of mutual concern under a combined umbrella discussion of strategic stability**.

1. European Security

The current changes in the military political landscape in Europe do not portend a large-scale conventional war in Europe. However, the re-militarization of Europe's northeast is underway. As a consequence of the crisis in and around Ukraine and Russia's increased military activities in its Western Military District, the Baltic States in particular feel geographically exposed and fear the prospect of Russia impinging on their sovereignties. Russian officials, in turn, strongly reject such notions and accuse NATO of undue belligerence.

At its 2014 Wales Summit NATO took the Baltic States' concerns into account and mandated relevant reinforcement measures. However, many Western analysts and military planners see these measures as insufficient for effective deterrence and argue for additional efforts at strengthening defenses. Officials from the three Baltic countries and Poland are vocal in support of such calls.

The upcoming 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw will likely approve additional measures to be taken by the alliance, such as the rotational deployment of one NATO battalion in each of the Baltic States and Poland.

Policy decisions on both sides have resulted in a dramatically increased level of military exercises and reinforced military presence in the region.

These trends put at risk the already tenuous application of the NATO-Russia Founding Act principles. The result could be an upward spiraling of arms build-ups with an increased frequency of military incidents leading to reduced security for all parties.

In order to prevent a negative action-reaction cycle in Europe, NATO and Russia need to talk to each other. But talks alone won't make Europe more secure. The aim of such talks must be reciprocal and verifiable measures of military restraint. The overall goal should be making the Baltic area more secure on both sides of the border.

1.1 Security in the Baltic Area

NATO member states assess the latest modernization of Russian conventional forces as a significant improvement of rapid regional intervention capabilities. Its main elements are enhanced flexibility, mobility and air defense of land forces as well as the potential for long-range precision strikes. In this context, frequent Russian snap exercises in border areas are seen by NATO as simulating threatening offensive scenarios.

In the Baltic area, geography favors Russia's rapid regional force accumulations over NATO's ability to deny access to an adversary and to reinforce quickly, given the realities of distances and time. Therefore, NATO member states have agreed on a number of reinforcement measures even before the Warsaw summit (see Box I).

Box I: *NATO Reinforcement Measures*

The NATO Response Force (NRF) will be further developed to an Enhanced NRF, its strength increased from 19,000 to 40,000 personnel, the readiness of an advanced element of 5,000 enhanced to enable rapid short-term deployment (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, VJTF) and the headquarters of the Multinational Corps North-East (MNC NE) in Szczecin (Poland) augmented. In addition, the frequency and size of NATO land and sea exercises in Eastern Europe, the Baltic Sea, and the Black Sea have been significantly increased, its exercise areas enlarged and the number of reconnaissance flights increased. Eight small headquarter elements and logistical units are being stationed in the Baltic States, Poland, Slovakia,

Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria to prepare for command and control as well as to provide logistical support for reinforcements after arrival (NATO Force Integration Units). Bilaterally, the U.S. undertook to maintain a continuing presence in Eastern Europe with a focus on the Baltic region and Poland by rotating land and air combat units and increasing the number of bilateral exercises. Furthermore, the United States has initiated forward deployment of 250 armored vehicles and other materials in the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Germany. This "European Activity Set" (EAS) can be activated for exercises and deployment of an armored brigade of 5,000 personnel strength, which would be flown in from outside the region. Under the European Reassurance Initiative, the United States has announced an intent to pre-position an additional armored brigade's worth of equipment and supplies in Europe and to deploy in Europe an additional brigade's worth of troops on a rotational basis. In February 2016, NATO countries agreed on establishing a multi-national enhanced forward presence in the eastern part of the alliance.

At the same time, Russian experts argue that it is the basic understanding in Moscow that Russia has accepted and respects the recent NATO and EU enlargements and does not seek to revise decisions of the two previous decades. The single issue it opposes is *further* enlargement of Euro-Atlantic institutions into the post-Soviet space.

Should Russia seek to convince concerned members of the alliance that it does not seek to revise their current status, statements or even written political commitments or declarations would not be sufficient. It would require more solid proof.

Strictly verifiable sub-regional arms control measures may offer important instruments to support such security assurances in exchange for less intense NATO activity in the region and the maintenance of commitments under the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

Continued adherence to the NATO-Russia Founding Act (see Box II) is a contentious issue amongst NATO allies. Some argue that the “the current and foreseeable security environment” of 1997 is no longer the security environment which exists today. Others argue that it would be shortsighted to undermine the only remaining political agreement on mutual restraint unless it is replaced with an agreement which better addresses today’s concerns.

One of the shortcomings of the Founding Act is that, while there was an internal NATO understanding, the alliance never publicly specified what “substantial combat forces” meant in terms of actual military units.

In 2008, Russia made clear that, in its view, the upper ceiling should be at the level of a full combat brigade (~5,000 men) “on the territory of all the other [NATO] States in Europe in addition to the [NATO] forces stationed on that territory as of 27 May 1997” (draft Agreement on Basic Principles Governing Relations Among NATO-Russia Council Member States in the Security Sphere). That was significantly lower than NATO’s internal understanding in 1997, but NATO’s measures expected to be decided at Warsaw in combination with U.S. bilateral measures would likely exceed what Russia defines as “substantial”.

Box II: *The NATO-Russia Founding Act*

On May 27, 1997, NATO and Russia concluded the politically binding Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation. Back then, NATO committed itself not to permanently station “additional substantial combat forces [...] in the current and foreseeable security environment” on the territory of new NATO member states. NATO also stated that it had no intention, plan or requirement to deploy nuclear weapons or their infrastructure on the territory of new NATO members. NATO gave Moscow this commitment in response to the Russian unease with the first round of NATO enlargement. Two years later, in 1999, Russia responded in kind by promising not to station “additional substantial combat forces” in the Kaliningrad and Pskov regions, which border the Baltic States. On a bilateral basis, Russia and Norway have concluded a similar agreement relevant to Northern Europe.

From a Russian perspective, any additional augmentation measures to be agreed at the 2016 Warsaw NATO Summit would threaten the viability of the Founding Act. Meanwhile, NATO, and the United States in particular, do not accept Russia’s interpretation and argue that planned and existing – mainly “rotational” – deployments are consistent with the assurances contained in the Founding Act.

The discrepancy between historical commitments and the current political situation as well as between different allies' positions creates a need for dialogue between NATO and Russia. Instead of solely relying on military reinforcement measures, NATO and Russia should explore a cooperative solution that would include, inter alia, relevant sub-regional arms control measures and CSBMs which could make anticipated reinforcement measures either unnecessary or less intensive.

Any attempt at a dialogue should be based on the following three guiding principles: (1) increased security for all in the Baltic area; (2) reciprocity of all commitments; and (3) verifiability of measures. Any cooperative arms control solution could include and define relevant restraint commitments, limitations on armed forces deployments and military activities, and adequate transparency measures.

Limitations: Limitations in the vicinity of the NATO-Russia border should prevent the destabilizing accumulation of forces in border areas on either side. However, their military relevance would be insignificant should such areas be too narrow and not take into account reinforcement capabilities from adjacent areas as well as long-range air power. Geographical asymmetries must therefore be factored into the equation. To be militarily relevant, the arms control measures should calculate the space and time needed to concentrate significant combat forces at the line of departure for offensive operations.

Elaborating a relevant regime for the Baltic area would represent a conceptual and political challenge since no legally binding agreement is implemented in the sub-region which limits military hardware and addresses postures based on capabilities for rapid

deployment and engagement (e.g., strategic airlift capabilities and long-range precision-guided munitions).

Confidence-Building: Earlier CSBMs in the European context responded to the concerns at the time that unusual military activities such as large-scale military exercises could be used for launching surprise attacks or building bases for large-scale offensive action. CSBMs aimed at early notification and observation of such activities that are valuable in that they can increase warning time and clarify possible ambiguous situations. Such approaches still have value today.

Transparency measures combined with verification and observation could help to ease tensions, avoid misperceptions and reduce the dangers of escalation.

Sub-regional CSBMs in specified border areas should have larger passive inspection and evaluation quotas, and lower threshold values for notifications and observations of maneuvers and unusual military activities as compared to generally applicable norms provided for in the OSCE's Vienna Document (see Box III). In geographical vicinity of NATO-Russia borders, the practice of snap exercises should be suspended in the current atmosphere of mutual mistrust. Multiple simultaneous exercises should be notified even if they are not linked by a common operational purpose and joint command and control, and even if no single one exceeds the thresholds.

In addition, policymakers could seek to establish a sub-regional Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism for the Baltic area as a continuous channel for dialogue and for swiftly addressing concerns related to possible unusual military activities.

Box III: *The Vienna Document*

The Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures was established in 1990 between OSCE participating States and was updated in 1992, 1994, 1999, and 2011. The politically binding document aims at enhancing transparency with regard to military activities through means of, inter alia, the annual exchange of military information and annual calendars; the exchange of specific data relating to major weapon and equipment systems; information on the plans for the deployment of major weapon and equipment systems; a mechanism for consultation and cooperation as regards unusual military activities; the voluntary hosting of visits to dispel concerns about military activities; and the prior notification and observation of certain military activities (such as maneuvers). With regards to compliance and verification, each participating State has the right to conduct inspections on the territory of any other participating State within the zone of application for CSBMs and to evaluate the information provided under the Vienna Document. Each state has a passive quota of inspections and evaluation visits (those that are conducted at the state's territory by another state). As a further stabilizing measure, the Document suggests additional voluntary measures at sub-regional and bilateral levels with a focus on border areas if necessary.

Restraint Commitments: Sub-regional as well as bilateral limitations and CSBM arrangements would be welcome. However, they would not be a viable alternative to a NATO-Russia arrangement due to the fact that any arrangements reached between Russia and its neighbors would have to entail a NATO dimension. This is why the NATO-Russia Founding Act, as the only remaining political agreement on mutual restraint, should be kept alive. It could still serve as a basis for further arrangements limiting the possibilities for destabilizing accumulation of forces and establishing a threshold against which military activities can be measured.

Based on the Founding Act, NATO member states and Russia could reaffirm their commitment to exercise restraint in the permanent stationing of substantial combat forces in the Baltic States and the Russian Kaliningrad and Pskov oblasts (with the Kaliningrad oblast bordering Lithuania and Poland, and the Pskov oblast bordering Estonia and Latvia). Similar bilateral commitments by Russia and NATO member state Norway could be reconfirmed as well. In that regard it would be important for NATO and Russia to finally agree on a definition of “permanently stationed substantial combat forces”.

At the same time, neither side would be prevented from enhancing the capabilities of rapid reaction forces, preparing logistics for their reception on the spot, and conducting exercises. Such agreement could be based on the understanding that exercises in the region, particularly those in border areas, which significantly exceed the above threshold, should be placed under strict transparency through early notification and observation as outlined above in the section on confidence-building.



Key recommendations

1. In order to reduce current security concerns in the Baltic area, NATO and Russia should initiate a dialogue on possible mutual restraint measures. All states should adhere to the NATO-Russia Founding Act.
2. A NATO-Russia dialogue should aim at increasing the security of all states in the Baltic area by encompassing reciprocal and verifiable commitments. A sub-regional arms control regime could consist of interlocking elements such as restraint commitments, limitations, and adequate CSBMs.
3. In practical terms, such a regime could foresee higher inspection and evaluation quotas, lower notification and observation thresholds, and faster prior notification of snap exercises. It could be complemented with bilateral or multilateral arrangements, such as the establishment of a sub-regional Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism.

1.2 Dangerous Military Incidents

Dangerous military incidents at sea and in air have become the subject of primary concern in recent years. Most of them take place in European airspace.

In the atmosphere of deep mutual mistrust, the increased intensity of potentially hostile military activities in close proximity – and particularly air force and naval activities in the Baltic and the Black Sea areas – may result in further dangerous military incidents which, if not managed properly, may lead to miscalculation and/or accidents and spin off in unintended ways.

In the worst case, if an incident was not managed promptly and effectively during a NATO-Russia crisis, there is a possibility that it might escalate to a full-scale war and perhaps even to the use of nuclear weapons.

Dangerous spin-off effects may also be generated by developments outside Europe, as the currently strained Russia-Turkey relationship with regard to Syria indicates. Hypothetically, this may trigger a chain reaction and lead to a more serious military stand-off or confrontation.

It is reasonable to presume that none of the dire consequences alluded to above would be intended either by Russia or NATO. Therefore, the immediate purpose of even limited measures would be to mitigate unintended consequences of military activities in order to avoid accidental or escalatory-prone incidents.

This would imply the establishment and/or revitalization and improvement of mechanisms to prevent dangerous military incidents by establishing specific rules of conduct and by maintaining relevant lines of communication. It would further require special mechanisms to prevent and/or arrest eventual escalation of such incidents.

Since potential unintended escalation would involve different levels of military interactions, de-escalatory measures of restraint and dialogue could be sought for the sub-regional (Baltic), the regional (NATO-Russian), and the bilateral (U.S.-Russian) levels.

Such a threefold approach can be started by reviewing the existing, primarily bilateral, U.S.-Russian instruments for the purpose of avoiding dangerous military incidents and by a joint assessment of their effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) and the room for improvement against the background of more recent experiences.

The overall goal should be to improve communications and to prevent dangerous military incidents between Russia and NATO, which could potentially lead to accidental nuclear war.

To prevent such incidents, including in the nuclear realm, Russia and the United States already rely on a number of foundational agreements (see: Box IV).

The existing bilateral mechanisms represent an opportunity for dialogue with the aim of reviving, improving and possibly expanding their operation and scope. A possible military-to-military risk reduction approach could seek room for improvement at the following three levels.

Improving Dialogue at the Bilateral Level:

Today, the two U.S. and Russian Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers (NRRCs) in Washington and Moscow exchange data (~7,000 notifications in 2015) not only on nuclear matters, such as the New START and INF treaties, but also on many other issues, including, inter alia, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Treaty on Open Skies, the Vienna Document, cyber threats, and space

Box IV: U.S.-Russian Nuclear Risk Reduction Agreements

- Memorandum of Understanding Between the USA and USSR Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link from June 20, 1963 which was supplemented by Agreement Between the USA and USSR on Measures To Improve the USA-USSR Direct Communications Link signed on September 30, 1971
- Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War Between the USA and USSR from September 30, 1971
- Agreement Between the Government of the USA and the Government of the USSR on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas (INCSEA) from May 25, 1972
- Agreement Between the USA and USSR on the Prevention of Nuclear War from June 22, 1973
- Agreement Between the USA and USSR on the Establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers from September 15, 1987. These centers started operating on December 14, 1987 simultaneously in Moscow (under the Ministry of Defense) and Washington (under the State Department)
- Agreement Between the Government of the USA and the Government of the USSR on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (DMA) from June 12, 1989

activities. The NRRCs operate 24-hour watch centers and contribute to transparency and mutual understanding through timely and accurate information exchanges required by arms control treaties and confidence- and security-building agreements with foreign governments.

One of the shortcomings of the NRRCs is that they cannot react on short notice to incidents. In order to improve their effectiveness and to broaden the operational foundation for preventing dangerous military incidents the following options could be pursued by the United States, Russia, and the North-Atlantic alliance.

To effectively contain and prevent the escalation of dangerous military incidents in the nuclear sphere between Russia and the United States, it would be useful to go beyond the NRRCs, which provide a U.S.-Russian communications channel.

One possible measure would be to create a Joint Military Incident Prevention and Communications Cell – jointly manned and operated, with U.S. and Russian officers and other officials co-located –to speed up clarification of intentions in ambiguous situations and avoid misinterpretation of activities. The joint cell would have a direct telephone link with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Russian General Staff, and NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). The joint cell could help resolve the most urgent problem currently faced – the immediate settlement within an extremely limited timeframe of ambiguous warnings generated by the U.S. and Russian early-warning systems or alerts of their nuclear command and control systems.

As most of the recent dangerous incidents took place in Europe, it would be desirable to create a new jointly manned European Risk Reduction Center, with a telephone link to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Russian General Staff, and SHAPE. This could complement the recommended U.S.-Russian cell, the existing communications channel provided by the NRRCs, and the crisis prevention mechanism that has been set up in early 2015 as a result of a German initiative.

Improving Dialogue at the NATO-Russian

Level: The resumption of dialogue between NATO and Russia within the NATO-Russia Council is a welcome step. It should be expanded by a continuous working-level and military-to-military dialogue on the prevention of and responses to military incidents.

Two existing bilateral U.S.-Russian mechanisms from the Cold War could be helpful in that regard. The U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea (INCSEA, signed in 1972) and Dangerous Military Activities (DMA, signed in 1989) Agreements set down rules to regulate the operation of the sides' military forces when operating in close proximity to one another in order to reduce the risks of accidents or miscalculation. Today, DMA is no longer active. It should be revived and, together with INCSEA, possibly expanded to include all NATO member states.

More than a dozen similar bilateral instruments exist between Russia and several NATO countries. Apart from exploring the ways of improving their effectiveness in the current situation, it is worthwhile to consider complementing such bilateral instruments by establishing a multilateral framework, which would include Russia and all NATO member states.

Improving Dialogue at the Sub-Regional

Level: Throughout the Cold War, Western allied nations and the USSR maintained a number of reciprocal military liaison missions in Germany – the then anticipated hotspot of a military escalation. The purpose was monitoring each other's activities and improving military-to-military communications.

The establishment of similar military liaison missions (but with full participation of the states on which they operate) in regions of mutual concern, such as in the Baltic area, would increase transparency of capabilities and intentions. This would entail Russian missions in the Baltic States (and perhaps Poland) and NATO missions in the Russian Kaliningrad and Pskov oblasts. A possible sub-regional Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism for the Baltic area as recommended under section 1.1 above could be complemented to include mutual NATO-Russian military liaison missions on both sides of the border.



Key recommendations

1. In light of the increasing dangers of military incidents between Russia, the United States and other NATO member states, the United States and Russia should revive dialogue on nuclear risk reduction measures, capable of addressing risks posed by different sorts of emergencies in near real-time.
2. The United States and Russia could consider creating a Joint Military Incident Prevention and Communications Cell with a direct telephone link to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Russian General Staff, and SHAPE. Such a joint cell could be established as part of or in connection with a new European Risk Reduction Center.
3. NATO and Russia should explore options for a multilateral dialogue on risk reduction. The bilateral INCSEA and DMA agreements could be revived and expanded to include all NATO member states. In addition, the establishment of mutual NATO-Russian military liaison missions in areas of mutual concern could help to improve communications.

1.3 The Role of the OSCE

The NATO-Russia dialogue tends to shut down in times of crises. Sub-regional formats are desirable but not yet available. In the absence of a viable alternative, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and particularly its Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) is readily available as a standing platform for discussing military political issues relevant to European security. The advantage of the organization is its three-dimensional, inclusive, and consensus-based approach to security (see Box V).

Box V: The OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe comprises 57 participating States in the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Its politically binding approach includes three “dimensions” of security: the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimension. In its politico-military dimension, the OSCE, and particularly its Forum for Security Co-operation, oversees the operation and implementation of a number of arms control agreements and CSBMs, such as the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Document. Its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) gathers information on the ground and reports on the security situation there. In 2016, Germany holds the Chair of the OSCE. It will be followed by Austria in 2017.

As a possible venue for exploring restraint and dialogue measures, the OSCE can provide the relevant broader discussion framework. However, it would hardly be able to address the substantial issues as long as NATO and Russia are not ready to move in that direction. This is particularly the case with regards the OSCE’s first dimension and the long-standing disputes and political linkages surrounding modernization of the Vienna Document and a possible revitalization of conventional arms control in Europe.

Beyond these well-known problems, OSCE participating States are facing additional challenges directly or indirectly related to the first dimension. The further operation of the Treaty on Open Skies (its implementing body related to the OSCE), the handling of threats associated with “hybrid” warfare, and the erosion of the founding principles of the organization require a constructive dialogue. Likewise, all three challenges represent possible opportunities for strengthening European security.

Treaty on Open Skies: Within the 34-signatories Open Skies framework, States Parties conduct short-notice, unarmed, observation flights over the territories of other States Parties with the aim of promoting openness and transparency, building confidence, and facilitating verification of arms control and disarmament agreements. Each State Party has quotas covering the number of observation flights a state can actively conduct over the territory of another state and the number it has to passively accept over its own territory.

Senior U.S. military officers have repeatedly criticized Russia’s proposal to equip its observation flights with new digital sensors and have questioned the treaty’s value for the United States. Other U.S. officials have noted the value

of the treaty's contribution to U.S. and allied security. Problems have also occurred with regards to national decisions restricting the flight paths of observation aircrafts.

What critics of the treaty ignore is the fact that the United States is also perfectly entitled to use such sensors, but its plans to acquire them have stalled. They also ignore that all measures conducted under the treaty are reciprocal in nature, that every Open Skies image becomes common property of all States Parties, and that all sensors employ unclassified, commercially available technology which must be approved prior to their use by all States Parties.

Questioning the treaty on grounds of alleged unilateral benefits is a shortsighted practice which could further undermine the OSCE's first dimension.

Instead of weakening the treaty, States Parties should strengthen its operation by upgrading their observation capabilities. States Parties should also refuse permission for overflights or propose modification to flights paths only where there is a valid reason, as specified in the treaty, for doing so.

Particularly with regards to the Baltic area, Open Skies observation flights are of high value for monitoring the security situation and should continue on a regular basis. Additional and reciprocal voluntary observation flights could be considered for this area.

“Hybrid” Warfare: “Hybrid” warfare is often used in the West and in Russia as a catch-all term to describe almost everything from the employment of irregular or disguised forces to the financial support of radical opposition or the use of propaganda and information warfare.

While the concept itself appears to be vague and often misleading, particularly when applied from the military defense perspective, it is also obvious that it encompasses a variety of real or alleged activities that may represent or be interpreted as impermissible interference in the internal affairs of a state, even if it falls short of qualifying as military aggression.

With its cross-cutting approach and commitment to the principle of non-interference, the OSCE is best suited to discuss the issue of “hybrid” warfare constructively. Such a discussion could begin with a review of existing definitions, including those in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

For this purpose, the OSCE could set up a commission mandated to look into the issue from a legal point of view and to address the question of what kind of interventions shall be considered illegitimate, elaborating further on the relevant OSCE norms.

The organization could also consider developing a new states-based mechanism designed to cooperatively address alleged cases of interference in domestic affairs of the participating States. Indeed, working out a mutually-acceptable mandate for this endeavor would be a delicate and complex question.

OSCE Principles: The crisis in and around Ukraine reopened the debate over the validity of the 1975 Helsinki principles, including the freedom of alliances, territorial integrity, non-use of force, non-interference in internal affairs, and self-determination. A stable European order is unlikely to be restored without

an agreement on a common and cohesive interpretation of and adherence to those principles.

The debate about OSCE principles is poisoned with mutual accusations, putting severe limits on the potential for serious and honest dialogue in the near-term. OSCE participating States should nonetheless recognize that achieving a common interpretation of OSCE principles is an important long-term objective, realizing that the process of pursuing this objective will be long, controversial, and sometimes volatile.

Participating States could start by exchanging views on what they think the challenges are and by discussing how to organize the process. The mid- to long-term goal could be an open process of complementing Track 2, Track 1.5 and diplomatic meetings and exchanges preparing the ground for the convening of a conference akin to the 1975 Helsinki Summit.

Germany could start exploring the possibility of convening a Helsinki-like dialogue focused on finding common ground on how the welfare and security of the larger region is to be secured.



Key recommendations

1. OSCE participating States should pay more attention to the continued operation of the Treaty on Open Skies as the treaty contributes to the security of all 34 members. States Parties should strengthen its operation by upgrading their observation capabilities.
2. OSCE participating States should initiate a dialogue on different forms of impermissible intervention in internal affairs, beginning with a review of relevant definitions in the respective international instruments. For this purpose, the OSCE could set up a commission which would look into the issue from a legal point of view and explore possibilities for a possible new OSCE states-based mechanism to cooperatively address alleged cases of intervention into internal affairs of participating States.
3. OSCE participating States should prepare for a long-term endeavor leading to a Helsinki-like conference with the aim of reinvigorating and strengthening Europe's guiding security principles. Germany could start exploring options for such a process, including complementing Track 2, Track 1.5, and diplomatic meetings and exchanges.

2. The INF Treaty and Cruise Missile Proliferation

The United States continues to publicly accuse Russia of being in violation of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

Without openly identifying the systems responsible for the alleged violation, the U.S. government refers to a “state-of-the-art” ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) that has completed development, has been tested at intermediate range, but has not yet been deployed. Russia rejects the accusations and has responded with a public series of counter-charges (see Box VI).

Attempts to resolve these issues in diplomatic meetings have so far been unsuccessful and skeptics of the treaty in both capitals have brought forward arguments in favor of abandoning the INF Treaty. Nevertheless, Russian and U.S. officials have expressed their firm commitment to the treaty.

However, no resolution of the compliance issues is in sight and European governments have started to worry about the potential consequences of a prolonged INF-crisis. Also, without resolution of the INF compliance issues, no new U.S.-Russian arms control treaties are likely to be concluded and entered into force in the foreseeable future – at least from a U.S. point of view. A five-year extension of New START would not require Senate consent. But if a New START follow-on treaty could be negotiated, it would have little chance for U.S. Senate ratification if the INF Treaty compliance issue had not been resolved.

In fact, there are even calls in the United States for Washington to suspend its involvement in New START over the INF dispute. While this is a minority view today, it could, over the next few years, jeopardize New START.

Box VI: *U.S. and Russian INF Allegations*

U.S. allegation: “The United States determined that the cruise missile developed by Russia meets the INF Treaty definition of a ground-launched cruise missile with a range capability of 500 km to 5,500 km, and as such, all missiles of that type, and all launchers of the type used or tested to launch such a missile, are prohibited under the provisions of the INF Treaty.”

(U.S. Department of State, 2016 Report on Adherence to and Compliance With Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments, April 11, 2016)

Russian allegations: “(1) The United States continued to test missile targets under its Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme, possessing characteristics that are similar to intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. In addition, these tests are also used to further improve key elements of missile systems that are prohibited under the INF Treaty.

(2) The United States continued to increase the production and use of heavy strike [unmanned aerial vehicles] UAVs, which clearly comply with the INF Treaty definition of ground-launched cruise missiles. It should be said that we have pointed to these two obvious violations of the INF Treaty by the United States for the past 15 years, but we have not received any constructive response from our American colleagues.

(3) A relatively new and very serious violation of the INF Treaty by the United States was the deployment in Europe of the Mark-41 (Mk-41 VLS) system capable of launching Tomahawk intermediate-range cruise missiles. These vertical launch systems are being delivered to Romania's Deveselu Air Base and there are plans to build a similar facility in Poland."

(The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Comment by the Information and Press Department on the US Department of State's report on adherence to and compliance with arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements and commitments, April 15, 2016)

The INF crisis comes at a time when the number of states developing and deploying cruise missiles is growing. This horizontal proliferation is matched by a vertical proliferation in the United States and Russia.

The Pentagon is pursuing the production of 1,000 – 1,100 new nuclear-capable air-launched cruise missiles (the Long-Range Stand-Off – LRSO – weapon) to replace older systems. Likewise, Russia's robust plans for deploying the 2,000 km range Kalibr land-attack cruise missile (LACM) on ships and submarines in all of its five fleets and the strong support for the Kh-101 air-launched conventional and Kh-102 air-launched nuclear-armed cruise missiles amplify this critical trend.

The absence of direct limits on nuclear-armed cruise missiles constitutes a lacuna in the nuclear arms reductions framework.

While all U.S. and Russian GLCMs of intermediate range are banned under the INF Treaty,

nuclear-armed air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) are not directly counted under New START; and sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) are completely unconstrained. Modernization of this category of weapons therefore constitutes a substantial challenge to achieving additional reductions in overall nuclear force levels.

Moreover, the greater accuracy and stealthiness of next-generation cruise missiles and the dual-capable abilities of their delivery vehicles increases the chances that, were a country subject to a cruise missile attack, it could receive ambiguous warning and might initially confuse a conventional attack with a nuclear attack. Cruise missiles are therefore a category of nuclear weapons, which are detrimental in terms of both crisis stability and arms race stability.

Given the complexity of the issues at stake and the difficult political climate in which the INF crisis is taking place, a combined approach of preserving the INF Treaty and addressing the potentially destabilizing effects of nuclear-armed cruise missiles is suggested in the following.

Resolving INF Compliance Concerns: The United States should be more specific about the alleged violation of the INF Treaty by Russia. Resolving U.S. allegations will not be possible as long as both sides do not agree on the nature of the allegation. The United States argues that it has provided Russia with sufficient information so that it could respond to the allegation. Russia denies that this is the case.

The dispute cannot be resolved at the diplomatic or political level only. In the first instance, each side must make a political commitment to address the concerns of the other. Without such a commitment, technical work to develop a solution cannot even begin.

Developing such a solution might require the additional involvement of technical experts. The United States and Russia should thus supplement ongoing diplomatic dialogue with technical expertise, either by convening the Special Verification Commission (SVC) or a separate bilateral experts group mandated to appropriately address all relevant treaty-related compliance concerns. Engaging at a technical level could also make verifiable conclusions on alleged non-compliance possible.

Disagreements on the U.S. use of booster stages in target missiles for ballistic missile defense tests ought to be resolvable at the technical level. The INF Treaty makes provision for such uses, and Russia presumably is using or will use similar boosters in testing its S-400 and S-500 interceptor missiles, which it advertises as having capabilities against intermediate-range ballistic missiles. A suggested group of technical experts could usefully work out language making clear the difference between prohibited intermediate-range ballistic missiles and permitted target missiles for missile defense tests.

Disagreements on whether armed UAVs, which both the United States and Russia are developing and deploying, are covered by the treaty could be resolved through negotiated clarifications of treaty definitions. The fact that armed UAVs and unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) may not have been in the minds of treaty negotiators, offers an argument that they are not covered by the INF Treaty. They may ultimately be deemed to be neither cruise missiles nor aircraft but rather a new third category. As Russia develops its own long-range armed UAVs, it presumably will have an interest in clarifying the difference between prohibited intermediate-range GLCMs and armed UAVs, or UCAVs.

Clarification of allegations regarding the Mk-41 missile launchers in Romania and those scheduled for deployment in Poland could require some transparency measures in order to reassure Russia that the launchers are not used for weapons other than missile interceptors. For example the United States – with the agreement of Romania and Poland – could allow Russian inspectors to periodically visit the missile defense sites and randomly choose one or two launch tubes to be opened to confirm that they contain an SM-3 interceptor, not another type of missile. Inevitably, such a process would have to be conducted in parallel with reciprocal Russian steps to address U.S. concerns about Russia's compliance with the treaty.

Addressing Destabilizing Effects of Cruise Missile Proliferation: The United States and Russia, and possibly third parties, should engage in a dialogue on the destabilizing effects of cruise missiles, particularly those, that are nuclear-armed. The fact that each side has expressed concerns about either the new air- or sea-launched cruise missile capabilities of the other could provide an opening to discuss confidence-building measures to reduce the destabilizing effects of such systems.

At a later stage, other countries developing cruise missile capabilities could be brought into such a dialogue. Horizontal proliferation by other states could be addressed to some extent by reinforcing the Missile Technology Control Regime's existing restrictions.

Parties to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation should endorse the inclusion of land-attack cruise missiles and UAVs/UCAVs in the Code.



Key recommendations

1. The United States and Russia should make a political commitment to resolve each other's concerns about compliance with the INF Treaty. After doing so, they should supplement ongoing diplomatic dialogue with technical expertise, either by convening the Special Verification Commission or a separate bilateral experts group mandated to appropriately address all relevant treaty-related compliance concerns.
2. Taking advantage of the panel of INF technical experts, the United States and Russia should address the issue of supplementing the treaty by taking account of technological and political developments that have occurred since the treaty's entry into force.
3. The United States and Russia should address the destabilizing effects of nuclear-armed cruise missiles by agreeing on specific confidence-building measures. Together with other nations, they should address the challenges of horizontal cruise missile proliferation by reinforcing the relevant Missile Technology Control Regime's restrictions and by endorsing the inclusion of land-attack cruise missiles and UAVs/UCAVs in the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

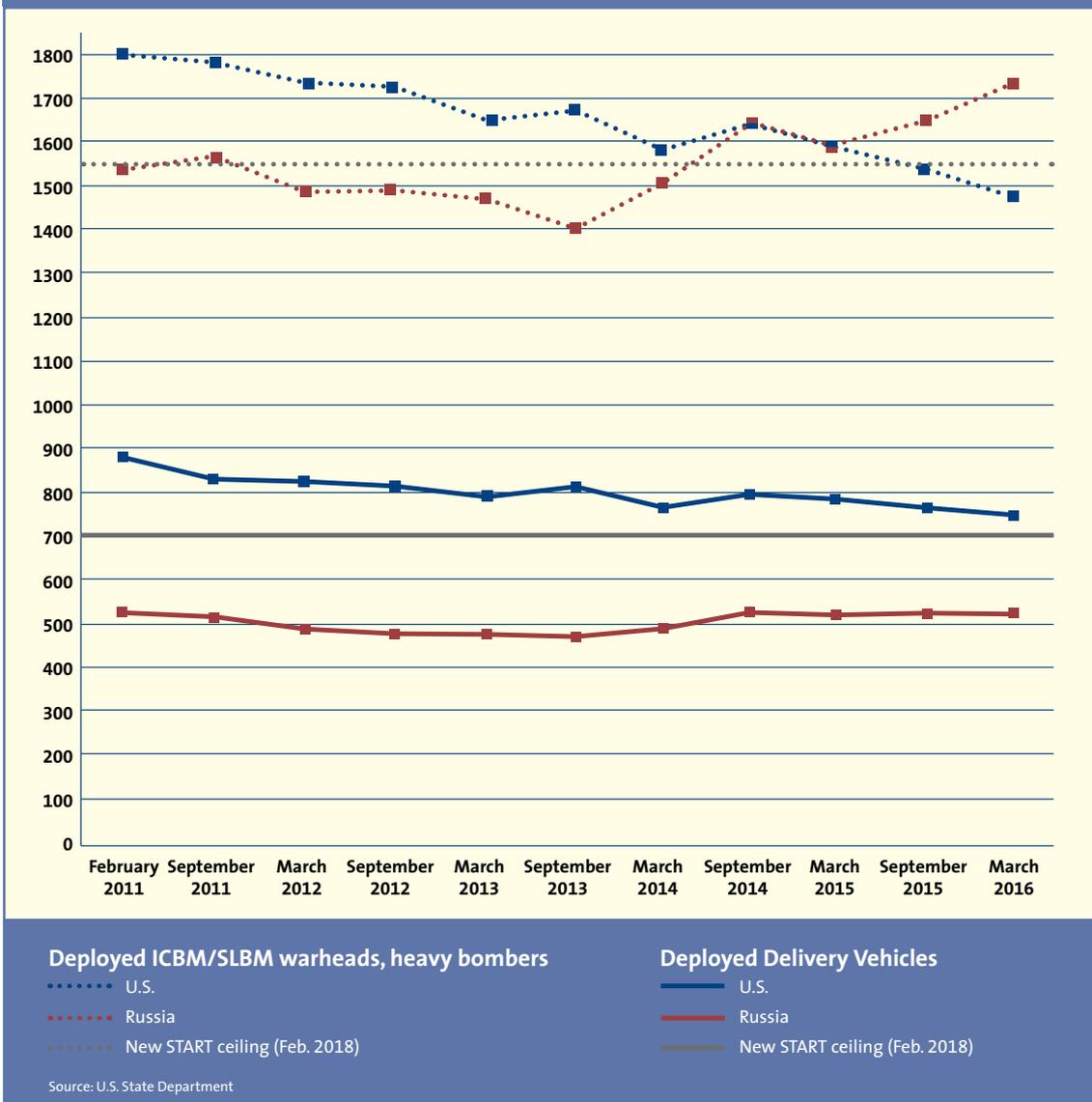
3. Strategic Nuclear Arms Control

The bilateral U.S.-Russian New Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (New START) mandates limits on deployed strategic warheads (1,550 each), deployed strategic delivery vehicles (700 each), and deployed and non-deployed strategic launchers and heavy bombers (800 each).

Implementation of New START is proceeding smoothly. The United States and Russia are on

track to meet the treaty's limits by February 5, 2018 (see Table I). The recent surge in numbers of Russian nuclear warheads does not constitute a breach of the treaty, and is related to the specific phase in the Russian strategic forces modernization program. New START will run until February 5, 2021 and can be extended for up to five years, if both sides agree to do so.

Table I: New START Data Exchange Numbers for Deployed Warheads and Deployed Delivery Vehicles



(Copyright: Arms Control Association, 2016; Source: U.S. State Department)

Given the increase in tensions between Washington and Moscow, New START is more important now than ever, both in terms of capping the strategic forces of the other side and in terms of providing essential transparency through information regarding those forces. It also provides sufficient predictability as long as nuclear modernization programs of the two sides remain compatible with New START limits.

Even though both countries are investing heavily in the modernization of nuclear forces, the treaty will help to prevent any new quantitative nuclear arms race between the United States and Russia.

Despite the obvious benefits of New START, further negotiated nuclear arms reductions are unlikely to be agreed upon any time soon.

Apart from the long-standing controversy over whether or not any further agreement should address or be complemented by establishing limits on strategic ballistic missile defenses and long-range precision-guided conventional capabilities, the current level of mutual mistrust, as well as the lack of political dialogue, are inhibiting progress.

The rational pursuit of U.S. and Russian mutual interests suggests that Washington and Moscow should adhere to existing limits on nuclear weapons and transparency measures, and that they might be inclined to extend the treaty by up to five years beyond 2021 (when the treaty is scheduled to expire). Such adherences would give them sufficient predictability in maintaining strategic stability at least through 2021 and perhaps longer.

However, absent negotiation on a follow-on agreement to the treaty and an active dialogue on mutual security concerns and strategic sta-

bility, the sides run a serious risk of relations derailing over related and unrelated issues.

It is therefore imperative that both Moscow and Washington make vigorous efforts to resume strategic arms reduction negotiations, search for common ground in resolving differences, and exercise restraint, showing sensitivity to the concerns of the other.

Provided such restraint and sensitivity are exhibited, the United States and Russia could reasonably cut their strategic nuclear arsenals, as a next step, to the level of 500 deployed strategic delivery vehicles and 1,000 deployed strategic warheads each.

It is less likely, but still conceivable, that a U.S.-Russian negotiation might include non-strategic nuclear weapons and thus negotiate an aggregate limit covering all U.S. and Russian nuclear warheads. Such an overall total limit could be set at a level of 2,500 nuclear weapons, with a sublimit of 1,000 deployed strategic warheads.

Some analysts argue that reducing nuclear weapons to these levels can be achieved on the basis of a bilateral accord without necessarily requiring the participation of third-country nuclear powers. However, engaging the latter on nuclear arms control issues remains an important objective.

Exercise of restraint that would make further negotiated or otherwise coordinated nuclear arms reductions politically feasible may include the following.

New START: Implementing and adhering to New START limits and transparency provisions as long as the treaty is not replaced by a new accord, and, if New START is not replaced by a follow-on treaty by 2021, extending New START by up to five years.

Missile Defense: The United States should show restraint in deploying ballistic missile defenses with capabilities against intercontinental- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, consistent with its stated policy that such deployments are to defend against the kind of limited potential threats posed by North Korea and Iran, not against the nuclear deterrents of Russia and China.

The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program significantly reduces the potential threat to Europe from Iran's ballistic missiles during the next decade by forestalling Iran's development of nuclear warheads. Moreover, contrary to the past projections of Western governments, Iran has not demonstrated an interest in extending the range of its current ballistic missiles beyond the ability to reach southeastern Europe, which is already protected by ship-borne Aegis systems, the Aegis Ashore site in Romania, and an X-band (AN/TPY-2) radar in Turkey.

NATO should therefore follow through on the commitment it made in the 2014 Wales Summit Declaration: "Should international efforts reduce the threats posed by ballistic missile proliferation, NATO missile defence can and will adapt accordingly" (para 55 of the Declaration).

Given Moscow's suspicions that NATO's plans to complete an additional Aegis Ashore facility in Poland by 2018 (with SM3-IA interceptors optimized for defense against Iranian intermediate-range ballistic missiles) is directed at Russia, this phase of the ongoing program should be postponed in accordance with reductions in the projected Iranian missile threat to Europe.

Long-Range Precision-Guided Conventional Weapons: The United States and Russia should exercise restraint in case of eventual

deployments of (not yet available) long-range hypersonic glide vehicles not covered by New START provisions. At some point in time, the United States and Russia might consider a separate instrument limiting such weapons systems or including them into a revised strategic arms reductions treaty.

Separately, the United States and Russia might engage in a military-to-military discussion of the capabilities of their long-range conventionally-armed cruise missiles and the impact of such systems on the strategic balance.

INF Treaty Compliance: While confirming their commitment to the INF Treaty, both the United States and Russia should take steps towards resolving the current compliance concerns as suggested in section 2 above.

Third-Country Nuclear Forces: It would be extremely conducive for further nuclear arms reductions and nuclear nonproliferation if other nuclear weapons states would exercise restraint in modernizing and further developing their nuclear forces, for instance, if the United Kingdom, France, and China would commit themselves not to increase the number of their nuclear weapons as long as the United States and Russia are reducing their arsenals. The three might also be asked to provide baseline data on their nuclear weapons numbers and types, but not necessarily locations.

The purpose of engaging third-country nuclear weapons states could also be served by offering to facilitate establishment of a multilateral "nuclear risk reduction center." It could include the exchange of information not only on missile launches, but also on space and cyber threats.

Nuclear Modernizations: Both Russia and the United States are modernizing their strategic nuclear forces within the framework of New

START. Russia might see room for additional restraint measures. Since there will likely be a scaling down of the pace of introducing new Russian strategic missiles over the next years, it might be sufficient for Russia to maintain 500 deployed strategic delivery vehicles during the next decade. Those could be configured to carry 1,000 deployed strategic warheads. If Russia were prepared to reduce to such levels, the United States would almost certainly be prepared to match it.

In parallel, the United States should re-think its plans for introducing new nuclear-capable cruise missiles (the LRSO) as older systems are retired. The United States deploys some 200-250 ALCMs at nuclear-capable bomber bases, but they are not limited directly under New START, which counts each strategic bomber as one under the deployed strategic warhead limit. With the U.S. modernization of each leg of the nuclear triad including a new and stealthy bomber, and a new generation of conventionally-armed cruise missiles, the LRSO appears redundant and dispensable. The same applies to

the new nuclear ALCMs being introduced into the air-based leg of Russia's triad.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT): Whatever the sides' respective nuclear modernization efforts, the United States, Russia, and other nuclear weapons states should continue to adhere to the CTBT, an international cornerstone of restraint which Russia signed in 1996 and ratified in 2000, and which the United States signed in 1996 but has not yet ratified. (The U.S. administration continues to actively promote the treaty's ban on testing and to seek U.S. Senate re-consideration of ratification.)

In this 20th anniversary year of the CTBT, the United States and Russia as well as other nuclear- and non-nuclear weapons states will have an opportunity to jointly reconfirm adherence to the treaty's provisions and redouble efforts to urge action by the other states, which must ratify the treaty in order for it to enter into force. A new U.S. Senate in 2017 may offer a new opportunity to seek U.S. ratification.



Key recommendations

1. With nuclear modernizations well underway, Russia and the United States should seek to exercise restraint in their nuclear force plans, remaining within the New START limits and acting consistent with the intent of the treaty to enhance stability. The United States should forego development of the redundant and potentially de-stabilizing LRSO and Russia should reciprocate with a phase-out of its new nuclear-armed ALCMs as well.
2. Russia and the United States should work towards early discussions on a possible follow-on strategic arms reduction treaty. Moscow and Washington should be able to envision reductions to a level of 500 deployed strategic delivery vehicles and 1,000 deployed strategic warheads each during the next decade.
3. Discussions should explore options for exchanging measures of reciprocal restraint and seek to include other issues of mutual concern under a combined umbrella of strategic stability. In addition, the United States and Russia and other nuclear- and non-nuclear weapons states should work together to enforce the global norm against nuclear testing and persuade those states, which must ratify the CTBT before it can enter into force, to take action.

The Deep Cuts Commission

The trilateral German-Russian-U.S. Deep Cuts Commission seeks to devise concepts on how to overcome current challenges to deep nuclear arms reductions. Through means of realistic analysis and specific recommendations, the Commission strives to translate the already existing political commitments to further nuclear reductions into concrete and feasible actions. The Commission is coordinated in its deliberations by the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy Hamburg (IFSH), the Arms Control Association (ACA) and the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IMEMO, RAS) with the active support of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. All Commissioners endorse this report's underlying assumptions, though they do not necessarily agree with every finding or recommendation and do not sign on to every single aspect of this report. Institutions are noted for affiliation purposes only and do not constitute institutional endorsement of this report.

James M. Acton (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)

Anatoli Diakov (Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies)

Victor Esin (Colonel General, Retired; Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies, RAS)

Dennis M. Gormley (University of Pittsburgh)

Gregory G. Govan (Brigadier General, Retired)

Erwin Häckel (German Council on Foreign Relations)

Catherine Kelleher (University of Maryland)

Ulrich Kühn (The Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy Hamburg)

Oliver Meier (German Institute for International and Security Affairs)

Eugene Miasnikov (Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies)

Victor Mizin (Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, RAS)

Götz Neuneck (The Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy Hamburg)

Sergey Oznobishchev (Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, RAS)

Steven Pifer (The Brookings Institution)

Sergey Rogov (Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies, RAS)

Walter Jürgen Schmid (Ambassador, Retired)

Walther Stütze (State Secretary, Retired)

Greg Thielmann (Arms Control Association)

Andrei Zagorski (Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, RAS)

Wolfgang Zellner (The Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy Hamburg)

Friends of the Commission

The following Friends of the Deep Cuts Commission have actively taken part in the deliberations of the Commission and have contributed to the elaboration of this third report of the Commission. They all endorse this report's underlying assumptions, though they do not necessarily agree with every finding or recommendation and do not sign on to every single aspect of this report. Institutions are noted for affiliation purposes only and do not constitute institutional endorsement of this report.

Tatiana Anichkina (Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, RAS)

Michael Brzoska (The Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy Hamburg)

Łukasz Kulesa (The European Leadership Network)

Robert Legvold (Columbia University)

Kadri Liik (European Council on Foreign Relations)

Kingston Reif (Arms Control Association)

Wolfgang Richter (German Institute for International and Security Affairs)

Kevin Ryan (Brigadier General, retired; Belfer Center)

Sergey Utkin (Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, RAS)

Drafting Group

Ulrich Kühn (Principal Drafter)

Greg Thielmann

Andrei Zagorski

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Graphic Design: Frasc Works – web [solutions]

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Relations between Russia and the West have fallen to an historic low. Hopes for sustained and comprehensive cooperation have dimmed significantly. Competition and selective cooperation is the new normal. The prime objective for the next few years should be limiting the potential for dangerous military incidents that can escalate out of control. Russia and the West must come back from the brink. They need to better manage their conflictual relationship. Restraint and dialogue are now needed more than ever. This report recommends that the West and Russia build on a number of existing arms control and confidence-building measures in order to avoid further exacerbation of the situation. It contains fifteen key recommendations and identifies a number of additional measures, which could help to address the most acute security concerns in Europe – particularly in the Baltic area – and increase U.S.-Russian nuclear transparency and predictability.

For additional information, please consult www.deepcuts.org.



Recommendations of the Third Report of the Deep Cuts Commission, June 2016



Security in the Baltic Area

1. In order to reduce current security concerns in the Baltic area, NATO and Russia should initiate a dialogue on possible mutual restraint measures. All states should adhere to the NATO-Russia Founding Act.
2. A NATO-Russia dialogue should aim at increasing the security of all states in the Baltic area by encompassing reciprocal and verifiable commitments. A sub-regional arms control regime could consist of interlocking elements such as restraint commitments, limitations, and adequate CSBMs.
3. In practical terms, such a regime could foresee higher inspection and evaluation quotas, lower notification and observation thresholds, and faster prior notification of snap exercises. It could be complemented with bilateral or multilateral arrangements, such as the establishment of a sub-regional Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism.



Dangerous Military Incidents

1. In light of the increasing dangers of military incidents between Russia, the United States and other NATO member states, the United States and Russia should revive dialogue on nuclear risk reduction measures, capable of addressing risks posed by different sorts of emergencies in near real-time.
2. The United States and Russia could consider creating a Joint Military Incident Prevention and Communications Cell with a direct telephone link to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Russian General Staff, and SHAPE. Such a joint cell could be established as part of or in connection with a new European Risk Reduction Center.
3. NATO and Russia should explore options for a multilateral dialogue on risk reduction. The bilateral INCSEA and DMA agreements could be revived and expanded to include all NATO member states. In addition, the establishment of mutual NATO-Russian military liaison missions in areas of mutual concern could help to improve communications.



The Role of the OSCE

1. OSCE participating States should pay more attention to the continued operation of the Treaty on Open Skies as the treaty contributes to the security of all 34 members. States Parties should strengthen its operation by upgrading their observation capabilities.
2. OSCE participating States should initiate a dialogue on different forms of impermissible intervention in internal affairs, beginning with a review of relevant definitions in the respective international instruments. For this purpose, the OSCE could set up a commission which would look into the issue from a legal point of view and explore possibilities for a possible new OSCE states-based mechanism to cooperatively address alleged cases of intervention into internal affairs of participating States.
3. OSCE participating States should prepare for a long-term endeavor leading to a Helsinki-like conference with the aim of reinvigorating and strengthening Europe's guiding security principles. Germany could start exploring options for such a process, including complementing Track 2, Track 1.5, and diplomatic meetings and exchanges.



The INF Treaty and Cruise Missile Proliferation

1. The United States and Russia should make a political commitment to resolve each other's concerns about compliance with the INF Treaty. After doing so, they should supplement ongoing diplomatic dialogue with technical expertise, either by convening the Special Verification Commission or a separate bilateral experts group mandated to appropriately address all relevant treaty-related compliance concerns.
2. Taking advantage of the panel of INF technical experts, the United States and Russia should address the issue of supplementing the treaty by taking account of technological and political developments that have occurred since the treaty's entry into force.
3. The United States and Russia should address the destabilizing effects of nuclear-armed cruise missiles by agreeing on specific confidence-building measures. Together with other nations, they should address the challenges of horizontal cruise missile proliferation by reinforcing the relevant Missile Technology Control Regime's restrictions and by endorsing the inclusion of land-attack cruise missiles and UAVs/UCAVs in the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.



Strategic Nuclear Arms Control

1. With nuclear modernizations well underway, Russia and the United States should seek to exercise restraint in their nuclear force plans, remaining within the New START limits and acting consistent with the intent of the treaty to enhance stability. The United States should forego development of the redundant and potentially de-stabilizing LRSO and Russia should reciprocate with a phase-out of its new nuclear-armed ALCMs as well.
2. Russia and the United States should work towards early discussions on a possible follow-on strategic arms reduction treaty. Moscow and Washington should be able to envision reductions to a level of 500 deployed strategic delivery vehicles and 1,000 deployed strategic warheads each during the next decade.
3. Discussions should explore options for exchanging measures of reciprocal restraint and seek to include other issues of mutual concern under a combined umbrella of strategic stability. In addition, the United States and Russia and other nuclear- and non-nuclear weapons states should work together to enforce the global norm against nuclear testing and persuade those states, which must ratify the CTBT before it can enter into force, to take action.