

051016 Air Force Association, Reserve Officers Association and National Defense Industrial Association Capitol Hill Forum with Rebecca Heinrichs, Fellow at the Hudson Institute; and Steve Pifer, Director of the Brookings Institution's Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative, on "Dealing With - and Dissuading - Russia: Missile Defense and Arms Control in NATO and Eastern Europe." (For additional information on NDIA/AFA/ROA seminars contact Peter Huessy at phuessy@afa.org).

MR. PETER HUESSY: Good morning, everybody. I'm Peter Huessy, and on behalf of the Mitchell Institute and AFA, NDIA and ROA I want to welcome you to this, the next in our series of seminars on, "Nuclear Weapons, Deterrence, Arms Control, Proliferation, Defense Policy and Missile Defense."

Just a reminder, tomorrow Ilan Berman is going to give an update on his book on Iran. On Friday, Frank Miller is going to be speaking about a number of issues. One is, what does deterrence do? Why do we have it? What are the moral imperatives for it? And basically address the panoply of issues raised by the really excellent CSIS event last week on nuclear deterrence, which was quite good.

For those of you interested in our Space series, Congressman Bridenstine is our next space speaker, and he'll be speaking on the 19th. He'll be talking about the risk to our space assets from threats from China and Russia, among others, including cyber threats and those from EMP and those from space interceptors.

Our annual nuclear deterrence triad symposium is going to be September 22nd. Please save the date, and if you'd like to be invited let me know.

I'm also helping put together the Exchange Monitor event in February of next year. It's from February 28th to March 3rd. We've going to have four days of nuclear deterrence issues about what should be the agenda of the next administration. If you have ideas, if you want to speak, let me know, please.

I want to thank our embassy people who are here, our guests and our sponsors. In particular, we have a new sponsor today from PricewaterhouseCoopers, who is going to help us video these events and place them on the AFA web site.

We have two very good speakers today. As you know, I generally don't have point-counterpoint type debates that you see on the media in which nobody learns anything. The trick is to get two people who may disagree but also probably agree on some things so we can illuminate the issues. The INF issue is one of the -- going through the press discussions, are the violations real, and are they important if they are real? What capability would it give the Russians, for example, that they don't already have? Is there a tactical and strategic consequence to them? What is the impact on future arms control?

Our two speakers are Steve Pifer from the Brookings Institution, and my

colleague and friend Rebeccah Heinrichs from Hudson Institute. We're going to first hear from Steve, and then Rebeccah, and they both will then take questions. If you do ask questions, please identify yourself so our speakers know who you are.

Would you give a warm welcome to Steve Pifer of the Brookings Institution?

(Applause).

MR. STEVE PIFER: Okay, Peter, thank you very much for having me here. Let me start the conversation on the INF Treaty by starting from the point that two years ago the administration declared that it had concluded that Russia had violated the INF Treaty by testing a ground-launched cruise missile at intermediate range. Above and beyond that, we don't have a lot of detail.

Administration officials have said some comments about what it is not. It's not, they say, an R-500 Iskander K, which is a short-range ground-launched cruise missile. And they say it is not either a ground test of a sea-launched cruise missile or an air-launched cruise missile, but it is in fact a ground-launched cruise missile with a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

The administration's goal is to bring Russia back into full compliance with the treaty, although it's not evident that they've made any progress at this point. The Russians say they support the INF Treaty, but they also deny that they violated the treaty and they deny that they even know what the administration is talking about.

In turn, Russia has leveled charges of three American violations of the treaty. They assert that the U.S. testing of SM-3 missiles against ballistic missiles were, in fact, testing against prohibited intermediate-range ballistic missiles. They claim that long-range armed drones are, in fact, intermediate-range cruise missiles. And they charge that the Mark 41 Vertical Launch Blocks for SM-3 interceptors in Romania, which will be made operational later on this week and then to be deployed in Poland, also violate the treaty. I'll come back to that in a little bit.

The Russian concern about the INF Treaty goes back at least a decade. You've had Russians basically raising the point that the United States and Russia are banned from having ground-launched ballistic missiles or ground-launched cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers, but most other countries are not. And when you look at the countries that have them: North Korea, South Korea, China, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel, most of those countries are much closer to Russia than they are to the United States.

So in one sense I can see the Russian point, but I would also argue that Russia has many other forces, including large strategic forces and a wide panoply of conventional forces that would offset any kind of imbalance that Russia might have with a third country in terms of intermediate-range systems. But if Russia does determine that it does have a security problem, the proper way to handle that problem is to exercise the

withdrawal provision. The INF Treaty, as does most arms control treaties, contains a provision allowing a side to withdraw with six months' notice if it feels that its supreme national interests in endangered.

From 2005 to 2008 there was actually quite a bit of talk on the Russia side about perhaps withdrawing from the treaty, including by people like Sergei Ivanov, the timeless Minister of Defense. He is now President Putin's chief of staff of the presidential administration. But the Russians, in the end, did not.

The U.S. response so far has been basically saying that the intention is to continue to observe the INF Treaty. I would argue that as long as the violation is a question of testing and not deploying, it makes sense for the U.S. to continue to observe the treaty. First of all, there's no detectable support on the part of America's allies in Europe or elsewhere to withdraw from the treaty. Second, at this point in time, the Pentagon does not have an identified military requirement for an intermediate-range cruise missile or ballistic missile that would be land-based.

Even if the Pentagon did have such a missile, I think it would be very difficult and probably impossible to deploy such a missile in either Europe or Asia. In the early 1990s we did succeed in deploying ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles into Europe. That was key to breaking the deadlock and getting the Soviets to negotiate a treaty that in fact banned those missiles as well as Soviet SS-20s. But in the process, I think we came very close to breaking the NATO alliance.

Ambassador Paul Nitze in 1981 took the famous "Walk in the Woods" where he deviated from instructions. He did that because he did not believe that NATO could go through with the deployment track. In fact, NATO did succeed but it was not an easy process, and I don't think you'll find many people on either side of the Atlantic who went through that who would like to do it again.

Likewise, I don't think that there would be support in Asia, in either Japan or South Korea, for hosting American intermediate-range missiles, even if they were armed just with conventional warheads. Deploying intermediate-range missiles in the United States doesn't seem to carry many military advantages and would only hold at-risk targets in Latin American or Canada.

The U.S. response so far seems to be focused on basically doing things that the administration is already doing in terms of nuclear force modernization and the European Reassurance Initiative in terms of building up conventional forces in Europe. I would suggest that the administration might want to consider two additional measures. One would be to look at developing and deploying defenses against cruise missiles, which would be useful if in fact the Russians go ahead and deploy a ground-launched cruise missile, but would be useful in any event.

We've seen the Russians demonstrate in Syria that they now have comparable capabilities to American capabilities in terms of sea-launched cruise missiles and air-

launched cruise missiles. These are going to be an increasing part of the military environment, so that would make sense.

Second, I think the United States should be looking at conventional capabilities that could hold at-risk Russian ground-launched cruise missiles if they were to be deployed or could provide countervailing options against other Russian assets. This would be deploying within Europe assets such as the Joint Air-to-Surface Strike Missile and the Extended Range. Both of those responses, by the way, would be treaty compliant and therefore should not be difficult with allies.

The last point I would suggest the administration might want to do is to think loudly about what a Pershing III might look like. Maybe put \$5 million into a feasibility study of the Pershing III and remind the Russian Ministry of Defense and the Kremlin just how much they liked the Pershing II.

(Laughter).

Now having said that, I would not put a lot of money into that because at the end of the day I don't think, if we built that missile, we could actually deploy it in a place where it could hold at-risk targets in Russia. But the Russians might not believe that we couldn't do it, and that might give them a bit of inspiration.

Finally, one other point on the diplomatic side is -- and I suspect it's difficult because the reason there is so little information about the INF Treaty violation, I believe, is because of sources and methods problems. It would be, I think, useful for the administration to find ways to make more information available, and not specifically publicly, but to other countries. Right now the problem is a treaty problem between the United States and Russia. It's a bilateral issue.

If the Russians, in fact, were to go ahead and deploy a ground-launched cruise missile of intermediate range it would not be capable of reaching the continental United States. Unless deployed in some areas where the Russians have not deployed nuclear systems in the past, it couldn't reach even much of Alaska. However, that system, deployed in Russia, could reach most of Europe. It could reach all of China, Japan and South Korea. It would seem to me to be to the administration's advantage to take what is now a treaty issue between Washington and Moscow, and make it a multilateral issue between Russia and many of its neighbors.

If Sergey Lavrov goes into Putin and says, "We got beat up by the Americans today about an INF Treaty violation and they say it's going to affect our relations," I don't think it has much of an impact. U.S.-Russian relations at this point are at their lowest point in 25 years. What we want to do is create a situation where Lavrov is going to Putin and saying, "I'm hearing it from the French, the Italians, the Hungarians, the Japanese and the Chinese." That might change the diplomatic approach.

Finally, on an optimistic side, if the Russians wanted to settle and try and find a

solution, in fact I think you could find ways to resolve all of these concerns. The Russian's concern about our use of ballistic missiles in missile defense tests, first of all, the INF Treaty actually has a cut-out for those sorts of tests. Also, the Russians advertise their S-400 and S-500 missiles as having capabilities against intermediate-range ballistic missiles. My guess is they're tested against something similar. So the way to resolve this would be in the Special Verification Committee. You could come up with language that just clarifies what is a permitted missile in terms of tests, and what's prohibited under the treaty.

On the question of these long-range drones, again I don't think the Russian argument has a logic. A ground-launched cruise missile goes from point A to B and destroys or blows up at point B. A drone goes from A to B, releases a weapon, and returns to point A. The Russian themselves, I think, are now exploring long-range drones with weapons, and at some point they may find that that's a capability they wish to have. Again, here too you may be able to work out a language fix that clarifies things so people understand this is a cruise missile that is captured by the treaty, these are drones that are not.

The third question, the Mark 41 Block launchers, that's the one that I think the Russians may have the best case on. When I ask people in the Pentagon what's the difference between the Mark 41 when it's in the ground in Romania and aboard a ship -- and the Russian argument is when it's on a ship it can carry not just the SM-3, but it can carry a sea-launched cruise missile, a Tomahawk, which actually is very close to what a ground-launched cruise missile used to be. And when you ask, what's the difference, you hear there's a software difference.

If the situation was reversed, I don't think we would be comfortable with the Russians saying, don't worry about it, there's a software difference. That's awfully hard to detect.

Then you ask, is there a hardware difference? I think the one hardware difference I've heard is that the Mark 41 would not have the fire control panel for a cruise missile that you would normally have on a ship. Again, I'm not sure that that's a difference that would be significant enough that it would put this concern to rest.

What I would suggest that we could explore if -- and it's a big if -- the Russians were prepared to be transparent, is to suggest you could do some transparency measures at the sites in Romania and Poland where you could basically say a couple of times a year a Russian team can come to that site. You'd have to work it out with the Romanians and Poles. They can say, okay, there's 24 tubes there, they get to choose which tubes -- tubes one and 17 -- to open up. We could open it and show that there was an SM-3 in there and not a cruise missile.

Now I would not do that unilaterally. I would offer that in the context of the Russians offering transparency measures that would be designed to resolve our concerns about their program. But if there was a way to -- if there was a willingness on the

Russian part to try to resolve this, you could see a solution that would not be too difficult. Unfortunately, at this point, you don't see that Russian willingness.

There's one other question the Russians raised about eight years ago, the question of multi-lateralizing the INF Treaty. There was a brief period where the U.S. endorsed the idea. The two countries, at the United Nations, proposed this. Not surprisingly, nobody took us up on it. But I wonder if there's some ways to think a little bit more creatively about that. Could the United States and Russia again in a different environment than we have now, work towards a multi-lateralization where you would not ask other countries to take zero, but maybe just cap their weapons? But at this point, again, there's no sign that you're going to see the Russians prepared to deal.

So let me just close. I think as long as the question is one of Russian testing and not deployment, it seems to me that the United States has some time. Again, there is no support that I've seen on the part of allies, particularly in Europe, for a hasty response to withdraw from the treaty. In some sense I go back to the model of the 1980s where in the Reagan administration you had for about eight years a Soviet violation in terms of building a prohibited radar at Krasnoyarsk. While the United States raised that issue regularly with the Soviets, we also concluded the INF Treaty, we made major progress on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

In the end, the Soviets came around and eliminated the radar. It doesn't seem to me that there's a reason now for the United States to rush on this question. I would strongly urge the United States not withdraw from the treaty. That would seem to me to then put the political onus on us for ending the treaty, and then we would be free to build that we don't plan to build. We'd allow the Russians then to go ahead and test and deploy missiles to their heart's content.

Thank you.

(Applause).

MS. REBECCA HEINRICHS: Good morning. Thank you, Peter, for hosting this. Thank you to Steve for agreeing to take our show to the road for the third year in a row. I really enjoy it and I think we have once again, just like last year, a lot of points of agreement, which is fun.

MR. HUESSY: We've got find another partner, it's not working out.

MS. HEINRICHS: I was just discussing with the folks at my table the last week I participated on a panel at CSIS in which we discussed President Obama's Prague legacy. It was an illuminating discussion, I think. The president of the Ploughshares Fund was also on the panel. At one point we had a nice little discussion about what Ronald Reagan's success was as a negotiator, especially as it relates to arms control. He and I saw it a little bit differently, but I think that the INF discussion is a great one to sort of look at as a case study for what makes for successful negotiations and how do we go

about this that results in a conclusion that furthers U.S. interests. So I think INF is a great one to look at.

The disarmament lobby, I would call it, is fond of citing President Reagan when it comes to arms control. But in the case of INF, as Steve sort of alluded to and discussed a little bit, we pursued a dual track. It was called the dual track for achieving INF. That included modernizing nuclear forces, deploying Pershing IIs to Europe, and I would add refusing to back down on SDI.

This was President Reagan's tack that he took while negotiating with the Soviets. He understood at what point the United States was simply not willing to concede. He understood what the objectives were. This is where folks like me, when describe this as negotiating from a position of strength, this is what we're talking about.

The treaty prohibited the United States and the Soviets from possessing ground-launched missiles with maximum ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. In doing so, what this did was it reduced the threat of surprise, and therefore it assured allies. This is why it was so crucial to abolish this specific class of weapons. And of course, it didn't just limit them, it abolished them.

This is an important point because this is why we tend to get really concerned about what the Russians are doing because even deploying one or two is -- when you're talking about how the treaty abolished an entire class of weapons, even small violations are a bigger deal. So the margin for error, I think, is much smaller and the risks are greater.

In 2007 The Guardian reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin was considering withdrawing from the INF Treaty. So it wasn't just coming from high level Russian officials, it was coming from President Putin himself. He said, quote, "It will be difficult for us to keep within the framework of the treaty in a situation where other countries develop such weapons, and among those are countries in our near vicinity," end-quote. So they began sort of alluding that this is something that they were considering, and reports continue to trickle out of both Russian media and U.S. media that the Russians were testing these missile.

And then, of course, we're all familiar with the heated debate over the New START Treaty that happened in 2009-2010. The Senate ratified the New START Treaty at the end of 2010. Then media broke, a story broke, that there was a small meeting with a few U.S. Senators, including then-Democrat Senator, of course now Secretary of State, John Kerry. He was quoted as saying once he found out, once he understood that the Russians were violating the INF Treaty, he said, quote, "We're not going to pass another treaty in the U.S. Senate if our colleagues are sitting up there knowing somebody is cheating," end-quote.

And so, of course, there continues to be a question of what the administration knew and to what level of certainty they knew, that the Russians were violating the INF

Treaty as we negotiated the New START Treaty. And then, of course, I think that that is what contributed greatly to the administration tabling this idea of going down and negotiating another arms control treaty after New START was accomplished. There just simply wasn't the stomach in the Senate for doing that.

And then in July of 2014 the U.S. did announce that the United States believed that Russia was in violation of the INF Treaty. Steve did a nice job of explaining what we believe they are -- what we think they may be testing and what we know that they're not testing. Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Brian McKeon testified before Congress and basically said the same thing.

He really set out to disabuse the notion that we might be mistaken. He said, quote, "There had been some speculation about what missile the United States is referring to and whether we have mistaken its testing for a treaty compliant sea-based cruise missile. The evidence is conclusive, Russia has tested this ground-based system well into the ranges covered by the INF Treaty. We are talking about a real system and not a potential capability," end-quote.

NATO, although it's not quite certain, of course, when it was made aware of the violations or when it knew, it certainly is aware now. In a statement by NATO allies produced at the Wales Summit in 2014, "The allies emphasize the paramount importance that disarmament and nonproliferation commitments under existing treaties are honored, including the INF Treaty, which is still" -- I added still -- "a crucial element of EuroAtlantic security. In that regard, the allies call on Russia to preserve the viability of the INF Treaty through ensuring full and verifiable compliance," end-quote.

So the alliance still is committed to the INF Treaty. It is still concerned about Russia's violations. And it is still of paramount importance to the alliance that Russia is forced back into compliance.

But I think that it's important to, rather than just look at what particular missiles the Russians may be testing and the treaty itself, to look at the greater context in which Russia is violating the treaty, which is something that Mr. McKeon does a really nice job of reminding people when he does testify. You have to look at the greater context about, what is Russia doing right now?

Over the course of the president's two terms Russia has, according to Obama officials, moved nuclear deterrence to the center of its national military strategy. The Russians have been very seriously thinking about deterrence in the post-Cold War context, and it has a much different way that it thinks about and uses and employs and threatens to use nuclear weapons now than it did during the Cold War. One major example we've discussed here is the Russian willingness perhaps to employ low-yield tactical nuclear weapons in a strictly conventional conflict. This is the "escalate to de-escalate" concept.

Russia has flown nuclear-capable aircraft into the airspace of the U.S. and NATO

allies, as well as Japan's airspace. It has threatened to employ nuclear weapons in response to U.S. missile defense systems, opposed EPAA, and it has ended the cooperative threat reduction programs, a major setback in U.S. nonproliferation efforts. It has increased its nuclear rhetoric. And to put its money where its mouth is, frankly, it's modernizing its nuclear forces. And it is incredibly irresponsible in what it's doing in terms of its war gaming exercises.

To put it mildly, Russia is not taking seriously NATO or Obama administration officials insistence that it abide by its treaty obligations and end its violations of INF. It is my understanding from talking to people who are familiar with the negotiations with what the administration is doing, they certainly are trying every diplomatic means they know how to force the Russians back into compliance. They are being met with a rejection of the facts.

The Russians continue -- Steve did us a favor by explaining the Russian argument for what it claims to believe the United States is doing in violation of the INF Treaty. I think that that's propaganda. I don't think the Russians actually believe that the United States is in violation of the INF Treaty, just like I don't think the Russians actually believe that U.S. missile defense systems planned and deployed for Europe actually demean or degrade the Russia nuclear deterrent. I think that the Russians know full well that the United States is not in violation, and that it is. So I think if we only focus on -- although I do agree if there's transparency measures that the Russians would be in agreement with, and perhaps there are ways the United States can do this, but I think to focus on that, as though that's the problem, that the Russians just don't understand, I think is not exactly where we should be spending the bulk of our energy.

In 2014 the Joint Staff conducted a military assessment of the threat that Russia would pose if it were to deploy INF missiles. During his testimony before Congress on the findings, Brian McKeon provided a list of some of what the administration is doing. A lot of details of this, of course, are classified, but he did explain some of the things we're doing, including working to improve defensive measures to deny Russia offensive capabilities by modifying and expanding air defense systems, including addressing the difficult challenges posed by cruise missiles.

He continued, developing new unmanned systems, a new long-range bomber, a new long-range standoff cruise missile, and a number of innovative technologies. We are also following through with plans announced in the 2010 NPR to modernize our nuclear arsenal, strategic and non-strategic, to be safe, secure and effective to both deter nuclear attacks and reassure allies. Now of course some of these things are not specific military responses to potential INF missiles, but I think it does show that the administration is trying to look at this holistically and trying to understand where the Russians might perceive deterrence gaps and how the United States might be able to respond accordingly.

I would argue that most of this, most of the list that Brian included, I think we should be doing anyway -- regardless of what the Russians are doing in terms of its INF Treaty violations: a modernized nuclear triad and finally getting these systems where they

need to be. But I do think that it is a good thing that the administration is signaling that it understands that this is part of the solution to getting Russia backing away from its more aggressive posture towards the United States and NATO.

There is more that could be added to that list. For example, I would say expanding missile defense deployments, and even adapting current plans for EPAA, like adapting Aegis Ashore to provide some cruise missile defense. Admiral Syring has said that this is possible, if the United States were to decide that it wanted to do this, that it could do this as well.

And I don't think it's out of the question to begin examining what the U.S. could gain militarily should it no longer be constrained by the INF Treaty. What are those weapons systems that the United States is not -- Steve mentioned that we don't have military requirements for INF missiles. But perhaps we should look at this again and take another look at this to determine whether or not the United States' interests would be served if we no longer were constrained by the treaty. I think this makes sense. I think it would also signal to the Russians that while the United States strongly prefers that Russia comply with the treaty, we refuse to be a party to a treaty in which we are the only ones in compliance. If the Russians persist in noncompliance, it doesn't make sense that the United States would remain in compliance with the treaty.

Some members of Congress are working towards this end. In a current resolution authored by individuals like Congressman Poe and Rogers, and then on the Senate side Senator Rubio and several others, introduced a concurrent resolution that was very short but basically said the same thing. It expressed the sense of Congress the president should hold the Russian Federation accountable for being in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty, that we should demand that the Russian Federation eliminate the military systems that constitute such material breach, and not engage in further reductions of U.S. nuclear forces and not engage in nuclear arms reduction negotiations with the Russian Federation until such military systems have been eliminated. I don't think that that's an unreasonable thing to require of the United States, and I don't think that that's a very contentious point either. And number four, consider in consultation with U.S. allies whether it is in the U.S. national security interest to remain unilaterally a party to the INF Treaty if the Russian Federation is still in material breach after one year.

I think that those are reasonable positions to hold. Whatever the course, we should build on the gains made by this Congress and the administration as it pertains to nuclear modernization, and devote the necessary intellectual capital towards deterring Russia in the contemporary context. More of the same won't suffice.

With that, I'll end my remarks and look forward to your questions.

(Applause).

MR. HUESSY: We have a question from Bobby Brant (ph).

MR. BOBBY BRANT: A lot of what you both said is pretty comparable, but what I'd like to do is hear you both talk a little bit about where you would think it would be in the U.S. national interest to withdraw from the treaty. Sketch some of the conditions under which you would advocate for it. IN particular, Steve, in your case you said at this moment you don't see immediately where we would be in a position to withdraw. Where would you find it appropriate to withdraw?

MR. PIFER: I think if the Russians crossed the line to deployment, and we had evidence of that, then I think at that point it becomes pretty clear. You might give them one chance to undo it, but it's also going to be critical that we have information that we can use to persuade allies. I'll give you an example.

I had a conversation some months ago with a senior official in an allied government who basically said, look, we believe you when you tell us that the Russians have violated the INF Treaty. It's not a question of doubt. But the information you've given us is so thin, our government is not going to come out and say this. What we can say is, we've heard this and we consign it to NATO, but we don't have -- I think the British have said something but I don't think you've seen any other allied government come out and make that kind of statement, that the Russians are violating the treaty. So I think whatever we do, we've got to have evidence to make sure that the onus is on them, because the Russians are going to try to cloud things up and make it look like it's our fault.

I get a little bit nervous talking about material breach because the material breach language of course is the point where the violation is of such a magnitude that you're almost compelled to withdraw from the treaty. I'm not sure we've reached that point yet with this violation.

MS. HEINRICHS: I would say obviously deployment would be one of the conditions, in my mind. Another one would be if we do take a hard look at military requirements and we once again go back to say, if we did not have the INF Treaty what could we deploy that would serve U.S. interests? And if we get to the point where we're unable to convince and persuade and pressure the Russians to become in compliance with the treaty, then we might determine at some point that that might actually be a necessary step, to possibly look at some of those systems again, and that might be enough to actually force the Russians to take another look at this and decide that it actually serves both sides to keep the INF Treaty in place.

It's a hard question to answer. How long can we know that the Russians are testing or are in violation of the INF Treaty? How long is our patience going to last for this and how much can we tolerate? I think that patience will begin to wear thin if we determine that -- wait a minute, there's systems that we'd like to test and deploy as well. So it's sort of a hard one to answer, but certainly deployment would be one, and then the stomach our allies have and persuading our allies of what the dangers are -- what they perceive the dangers are -- and what would be in their interests. But it's hard. I mean, this has been years now. They've been in violation for years. And now that the

administration is willing to talk about it more openly, you can see and sense the frustration on the part of our diplomats that they really aren't getting anywhere with the Russians. So that sort of -- if this administration were to have another term, probably the patience would be wearing a lot thinner. But we're going to have a new administration and a lot of fresh faces, so we'll see.

MR. PIFER: Of course when you had this question with the SS-20 back in the 1970s the initial impetus for doing something like the dual track decision came from Europe.

MS. HEINRICHS: Right.

MR. PIFER: I remember the Carter administration said wait, wait, we don't need to do this, we have sufficient strategic capabilities. And then in part, because I think the way the Carter administration mishandled the whole question about the enhanced radiation weapon, they came around. So far you haven't seen that push coming from Europe. And again, it may be from lack of information.

MR. : Do you see a connection between the INF problem and the CFE problem? In both cases the treaties were a great success in carrying out huge reductions. The CFE Treaty is practically dead because of Russian actions. But in both cases -- in the CFE case both sides are remaining in the treaty. The effect is mainly on our European allies, in both cases, and yet they have almost nothing to say about it. Do you see a connection between the two?

MS. HEINRICHS: The connection that I see is that the Russians are demonstrating a willingness to not abide by treaties. I mean, we're seeing a pattern. We're seeing an overall pattern with the Russians in terms of their arms control obligations. I think it's a fair point.

U.S. administration officials bring up CFE almost every time they talk about INF. So I don't think that this is lost on U.S. officials as they try to pressure the Russians to be back in compliance with treaties. But I think it's an important point. And that brings us back to, again, how seriously do we take the Russian protests when they claim that the United States is in violation of the INF Treaty, when they've shown their willingness to do this with other treaties as well?

MR. PIFER: I guess I see it a little bit different, because the Russians in 2007, when they announced they were suspending their observation of the CFE Treaty, what they were protesting was the failure on the part of NATO countries to ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty. That broke down to, I think, different interpretations about what commitments had been made when the Adapted Treaty was signed. The U.S. view was that the Adapted Treaty would be ratified only when certain political commitments by the Russians were honored with regards to withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia and Moldova and such.

The Russians met most of those commitments. They withdrew from three of the four bases in Georgia. And this is all, of course, prior to 2008 and 2014. So there was that dispute there that went on. I don't think you have a real parallel in the INF where it looks like the Russians have gone off on their own.

MS. HEINRICHS: I would also say, though, I disagree with Steve on that point. I think, again, you can see a pattern, an overall pattern, with how the Russians are treating their obligation. The Open Skies Treaty is another one in which they're not allowing the United States full access in particular areas which we want access to, while demanding that they have increased access to the United States. So again, you can look at one treaty violation and look at it by itself, exclusively, or you can sort of look at the whole picture in a greater context, and I do think that they are related, if not directly.

MR. : I'm concerned about two things. One, the Department of Defense seems to hide behind, we don't have a requirement for it, until they want it. And then all of a sudden, the requirement materializes. The second thing that concerns me is if you wait until a material breach, aren't you so far behind the power curve it's going to take you maybe a decade to catch up? Shouldn't some actions be taken prior to that to put yourself in a position that -- if you believe we're on a road to a material breach, you're prepared for it?

MR. PIFER: A couple of questions. If the Russians violate the treaty, and we decided to restore a ground-launched cruise missile capability of our own, I'm not sure that would require a decade. We know how to build the launchers. Again, the ground-launched cruise missile, the BGM-109G, was basically just a variant of the Tomahawk. So I don't think restoring that capability would take all that much time.

I guess the second point is, if you're looking at the response in terms of building a U.S. comparable capability, I would go back to saying before we invest the money in building that capability, let's make sure we have a place to put it. Pershing IIIs or new ground-launched cruise missiles at Fort Sills, Oklahoma aren't much of a threat to Russia. Again, I get back to the point, I think it would be very hard to find a European member of NATO -- I'm absolutely certain you would not get a NATO consensus as you had back in 1979 for the deployment of new American intermediate-range missile in Europe. Now if you wanted to do it on a bilateral basis, there might be a couple of countries that would do that, but you would want to have some assurance you could actually deploy these things before you invested the billions of dollars to build them.

MS. HEINRICHS: I would just say it might be hard, maybe, but I've also spoken with many of our allies and many of them are demonstrating a very serious concern about what Russia is doing, and in particular with this particular treaty. We might disagree on what constitutes a material breach. I mean, the Congress has declared this a material breach. They are receiving information that I'm not receiving, and they're determining that this is a material breach. That's not the language, of course, that the administration is using, but you can sense the worry that they have about the extent to which Russia is violating it.

MR. PIFER: There are some in Congress.

MS. HEINRICHS: No, from the -- what do you mean?

MR. PIFER: When you say Congress has determined a material breach --

MS. HEINRICHS: Some in Congress. I'm sorry, some in Congress are calling it that, have declared it, have written in this concurrent resolution that it is a material breach. Exactly. Some disagree.

But there are -- I have heard, though, that it might make a lot of sense that we might -- to get to your point, we could begin testing some of these systems. Would that be in violation of the INF Treaty? No more than in violation of what the Russians are currently doing right now. We might decide that it might make sense to go there before actually withdrawing from the treaty, and that might be enough to get the Russians to stop what they're doing and eliminate those systems.

So I think there is more ground we could cover before we get to actually withdrawing from the treaty. But the point is important. The government does like to use this military requirement issue as a means of providing themselves cover before they actually want to go forward with a weapons systems.

So I do understand the point, but there's more we can do between here and there before we actually get to the point of withdrawing. At this point it's still in the U.S. interest to get Russia to actually become in compliance with the INF Treaty. So I think we should still be trying to work towards that end.

MR. PIFER: I'd just start with a baby step. I'd do a feasibility study. You can, I think, for a very small investment, get the Russians worried about it. But again, once you're talking about building a system to the point of testing, then you have to be prepared to commit serious money at a time where I think the defense budget also has a lot of other demands.

MR. ROBIN MCKAI (ph): Robin McKai, thank you very much for your remarks. You made an interesting comment about the Reagan administration's strategy, sort of holistic strategy to press the Russians to a certain course of action. Part of that was budget certainty, allocating the kind of resources that were necessary. We heard last Thursday from General Wilson the same sort of theme, that it was critically important to maintain that focus and the determination to commit compelling resources to telegraph national intent on modernization of the triad. I wonder to what extent you see an appetite in Congress today to perhaps broaden what the Navy seems to have accomplished with the Sea-Based Deterrent Fund, and expand that to the entire strategic deterrent?

MS. HEINRICHS: Gosh, you're asking me about what Congress thinks these days. I don't know, and the coming months are going to be interesting. We're in a really

heated presidential election, so there's a lot of concerns right now. I don't know what the makeup of the House and the Senate is going to look like after this election. I don't know who is going to occupy the White House. Those are all major uncertainties that I just don't know.

I do think the case has been made very, very well that we need to increase defense spending to some significant degree. We need to get rid of the constraints of the effects of sequester. But again, I would say I am encouraged over the last several years about the bipartisan consensus that we have to maintain the triad, that all three legs of the triad are critically important, that there's going to be no more unilateral cuts, that the United States has got to be serious about planning for nuclear modernization in a concerted and sustained effort over the next couple of decades.

I'm very encouraged by that, especially with this administration at the helm. The president, I believe, was very, very committed to moving down further, to reduce U.S. nuclear weapons. There was some interest in looking to see if we could move to a dyad, and I think all of that was looked at in a very serious way with a lot of motivation to do that, and that was askew. That was put away with and the administration decided not to go that way. There has been great bipartisan consensus to move forward on the path that we're on, and so I am encourage by that. But again, I worry that some of the gains that we have achieved could be lost depending on what happens in this election cycle.

MR. PIFER: I might just add, I support maintaining the triad and I think we'll be doing that in the 2020s. I'm not sure that all the numbers make sense. For some aspects, I don't think the administration or the Pentagon has made a compelling case for doing both a B-21 penetrating bomber and having a new long-range strike option in a new long-range cruise missile. I'd question that part, but I do agree with the notion of maintaining the triad.

Having said that, the notion of having a Sea-Based Deterrent Fund that covers all elements of strategic modernization, it doesn't make any sense to me. The money is the same. The U.S. Army is the one that ought to worry about this, because it looks like a Navy and Air Force attack to try to get resources from the Army.

(Laughter).

MR. : That's never happened before.

(Laughter).

MR. PIFER: Yeah, and again, without that increase of money -- and I think if you look at the politics my guess is that the Pentagon is going to have to live with pretty much something like it has now. I think a significant increase in defense resources is not likely in the current political environment.

MR. HUESSY: I have a question for you both. There has been an argument that,

let's say the Russians break out of the INF Treaty and build INF-range missiles. Put yourself in the position of an analyst trying to figure out what are the Russians up to, apart from just the bean counting. What would they do with the weapons that they wouldn't be able to do now without them?

MS. HEINRICHS: One of the capabilities it gives you is it gives you the ability to -- it increases your ability to have a surprise option. It's not much different now than it was -- the reasons aren't much different now on why we would be opposed to them as they were at the time in 1987. It's the same. They would give the Russians the advantage of surprise, and that would destabilize NATO. So that's sort of the general problem with that.

To add one more point, this is exactly -- it shouldn't surprise us that the Russians are doing this. This is exactly in line with everything else, falling in line with Russia's new adapted military strategy, threatening a pre-emptive nuclear attack in order to de-escalate a conventional conflict, etcetera. That's why this is a little bit more nerve-wrecking than it might be otherwise. I might be a little bit more concerned about it than Steve because I can see that follows this general path that the Russians are on for how it understands the use of nuclear weapons.

MR. PIFER: It would seem to me that if the Russians did break out of the INF Treaty and deploy ground-launched cruise missiles of intermediate range, I think at best it gives them a marginal addition to their existing military capability. I'm not sure that ground-launched cruise missiles would do much more than they could already do with their air-launched cruise missiles, their sea-launched cruise missiles, or flying strategic forces at less than intercontinental range.

So I don't see this as much as maybe a surprise. I think this gets back more to the question of, in the same way as the SS-20, it's more political. It's more aimed at trying to decouple the United States from Europe by opposing a specific threat to European countries, and that the Russians may have this idea that they can then sort of control and dominate the escalation ladder and somehow, quote, "limit" and I use limit in quotation marks, a nuclear conflict in Europe where the United States might not be prepared to engage its strategic forces. I think --

MS. HEINRICHS: Isn't that a military capability, though? I mean, doesn't that in and of itself give it a military advantage?

MR. PIFER: Yes, but it's more than a military -- again, I'm not sure we have to fall into this trap. This is one I would criticize the administration on. There's been a lot of loose talk coming out of Moscow the last two or three years about nuclear weapons, to the point where the Russian ambassador to Denmark feels he can go out and threaten his host country with being targeted with nuclear missiles. It seems to me that the first response ought to be not talking about building new American systems, but having something that hasn't happened I think for 20 years, a serious policy speech on nuclear deterrence.

We were talking about this a little bit over breakfast. I would like to see Secretary Carter -- and he began to do it last week -- but in a more organized way go out and specifically take on the idea of saber rattling, this escalate to de-escalate doctrine, and say look, we want to be clear here. A nuclear weapon is a nuclear weapon is a nuclear weapon, and once you've used a nuclear weapon you've crossed a threshold, a threshold that hasn't been crossed in 70 years, you need to anticipate that it's a Pandora's Box and the consequences are going to be dire, unpredictable, and such.

We ought not to let the Russians sort of persuade themselves that a few small nuclear weapons will be somehow different. I think that's almost as much as a policy in terms of articulating an American (doctrine ?) as anything else.

MS. HEINRICHS: I would absolutely agree with that. I think one of the problems that we have had is that we've allowed this ambiguity, and we've behaved in a way so that the Russians actually believe that it might be in their interest to talk about these things and to potentially do that. I think that doesn't serve our interests because that would be a serious miscalculation on the part of the Russians. So I would agree.

MR. HUESSY: Let me follow that up with -- when you say it's a political effort by the Russians, many of our colleagues and people in the media will say it therefore has no military consequences. But as Rebecca pointed out, if you decouple NATO from the U.S. that is a huge military consequence. And the fact that they achieved it with political aims doesn't change the fact that it has enormous military consequences.

MR. PIFER: Right.

MS. HEINRICHS: And it also frees up their other weapons systems. If you create an entire new category of weapons systems you're freeing up other weapons systems to do other things that would pose a threat to the United States. I mean, there's a reason that we continue to hear our NORTHCOM commanders are concerned about the cruise missile threat to the United States. They are not unrelated, I think. So there is clearly a military advantage that the Russians are seeking, otherwise they wouldn't be pursuing it so hard. Yes, political as well, but because of the military advantage that is grants them.

MR. HUESSY: I'll give you the last word.

MR. PIFER: Again, it does but I think in the military capability the addition is going to be marginal. I'd go back to statements made by military officials, U.S. officials, going back a couple of years ago where they said even if the Russians were to violate the New START limits, that we still have significant capability and they would not see the U.S. side in danger. So I think if the Russians go forward with this, it's much more with a political goal in mind. Now that doesn't mean it's any less serious to U.S. national security goals, but I see it more as a political threat rather than a military threat.

MR. HUESSY: Thank you.

(Applause).

If you enjoyed that, please come tomorrow and Ilan Berman will scare the Hell out of you when he talks about our friends in Iran.

(Laughter).

Thank you all. Rebeccah and Steve, an extraordinary conversation. I will see you all here tomorrow, and then on Friday with Frank Miller. Thank you.