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TRADE

“CONSEQUENCES AND CONTEXT FOR RUSSIA'S VIOLATIONS OF
THE INF TREATY”

MARCH 31, 2017

Introduction

Chairman Rogers, Chairman Poe, Ranking Member Cooper, Ranking Member Keating, distinguished members, thank you for inviting me to testify on possible next steps in light of Russia's violation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. This is the first time I have had the honor to testify in front of this Foreign Affairs Subcommittee and the first time I have testified since leaving my position in the Obama Administration. As such, I do want to emphasize that my testimony represents my personal views only, not those of the previous or current Administrations.

To begin my testimony today, I want to start with a somewhat obvious and critical point that deserves emphasizing: Russia's violation of the INF Treaty and its subsequent deployment of the violating system must be considered within the context of Russia's overall aggression and the security environment more broadly. While some believe, myself included, that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to bring Russia back into compliance, I also believe that right now it is in our best interest to do all we can to press the Russians to return. Having the INF Treaty in force enhances strategic stability, and our Allies want to see that we have worked diligently to try to convince Russia. Any such diplomacy must be accompanied by clear indications that we will not allow the Russians to benefit from their violation. The Administration should consider taking a combination of military actions—all of which would be Treaty compliant—along with diplomatic and economic actions to tangibly demonstrate that we can ensure Russia does not achieve the advantages they seek by deploying this system. These actions must be developed and carried out in coordination with our Allies. Our Alliance structure is key to our strength, and it is imperative that we continue to maintain and cultivate it.

Background

The INF Treaty has been a mainstay of stability in Europe since it was signed in 1987 and entered into force in 1988. Since that time, while there are many military systems and forces in Europe, no one on the Continent has had to worry about the threat from these types of missiles.

That is until recently. The US State Department officially announced in July of 2014 in the Department's Compliance Report: "The United States has determined that the Russian Federation is in violation of its obligations under the INF Treaty not to possess, produce, or flight-test a ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) with a range capability of 500 km to 5,500 km, or to possess or produce launchers of such missiles." This determination should not have surprised anyone given that Russian leader Vladimir Putin had made it clear he no longer felt that this treaty was in Russia's interests.

So while this hearing is about what to do now that the Vice Chairman has indicated his belief that the violating system has been deployed, I would note that it is not the deployment of the missiles that violated the treaty...the Russians had already been in violation of the treaty for a long time. However, there is now a need for a stronger and more concrete US response.

Impact of the Treaty Violation

The violation of the INF Treaty is important for both political and operational reasons. Politically, INF was one of the more stable, and stabilizing treaties signed during the Cold War. It was one of the few arms control treaties that did what many thought could not be done...it eliminated a class of weapons, not just reduced their number. And the treaty's survival beyond the dissolution of the Soviet Union was another example that Russia valued strategic stability and that these Cold-War era treaties remained valuable in the region. The fact that Russia is willing to violate this treaty cannot be taken lightly, although the fact that they continue to deny this violation indicates that they still place some value

in the perception that they are compliant with the treaty and that the treaty itself still exists.

Operationally, these Russian missiles provide Russia with a significant offensive capability that would directly threaten the whole of Europe and nearly all NATO Allies. These missiles are by no means the only way to hold NATO territory at risk—Russia has multiple systems that can do that without violating the INF Treaty. Yet these missiles, deployed in significant numbers, would give Russia an operational capability to immediately and significantly threaten and, with little warning, attack NATO capitals and facilities. While the Alliance has some overall capabilities to counter these threats, the violation presents a diplomatic and operational problem today, and any increase in the number of these Russian missiles would continue to complicate Alliance planning, increase significantly the number of priority targets in any operation, and quickly overwhelm any current air and missile defense systems deployed in Allied nations.

Context of the Violations

While I do not want to speculate on why Russia has chosen to develop, test, and field a system that violates the INF Treaty, I do think that it is important to see this activity within the context of the entirety of Russian aggression over the past few years. The House Armed Services Committee heard much of the military context from General Scaparrotti during the hearing earlier this week. While we do not have time to delve into all of Russia's recent activities, the broader point remains: we have seen a series of both meditated and opportunistic actions taken by Russia to either expand its influence in the nations nearest to Russia, or to try weaken the international system, most notably—but not limited to—the NATO Alliance. In some cases this has been done with the use of force, for example the illegal invasion and annexation of Crimea along with support to separatists in other parts of Eastern Ukraine. In other cases Russia's actions have been more subtle and targeted at sowing discord within European

democracies, and even here in the United States. All the while, Russia has flaunted international norms while brandishing its nuclear arsenal for the first time in a generation, as if daring the world to respond. Fielding this system, denying that they are violating the INF Treaty, and then countering US findings of their violation with specious assertions of US violations falls directly within this pattern of behavior.

The question then turns to what to do about this violation and the serious nature of the political and operational threat caused by Russia's actions. I will focus on what I believe are the operational and Defense Department responses that we should consider as a result of the violation and leave the diplomatic and economic recommendation to my fellow witnesses and former colleagues, but I do want to repeat that I endorse the idea of trying to bring Russia back into compliance with the INF Treaty. Continuing to talk to the Russians while they maintain denial may have the effect of somewhat slowing down their fielding of the system.

While we work to persuade Russia to comply with the treaty, I recommend we plan as if they will continue to produce and field the violating system. This planning is prudent and strategic—our only chance at getting the Russians to even contemplate compliance is by pursuing concrete measures across all elements of US power to convince the Russians that violating the treaty makes them worse off and less secure. And the foundation of that pressure should be measures taken by the US Department of Defense in conjunction with our NATO Allies.

US and Allied Responses

From the defense perspective, the first requirement is that the United States and our Allies take action to ensure that Russia does not achieve any operational advantage from fielding a system that violates the INF Treaty. Even though politically the violation is a significant problem, given what I have read to be the

assessed small scale of the current deployment, the actual military implications right now would be relatively easy to address within our current structure and forces in Europe and globally deployed. However, any prudent planner would have to consider that the operational challenge will become more difficult if Russia continues to increase its deployment of this system. Further, I would argue that since the US government has assessed that this system has been fielded and is not just in testing, our policies should be oriented towards demonstrating to Russia that they are actually going to be worse off militarily if they continue to field this system. That is a harder task, and will require more thought and likely more or different equipment than we have in Europe right now.

But, it is important that we not think about responses to this violation only in terms of the threat from a particular system or missile. Since this violation is in the broader context of the range of aggressive behavior we've seen from Russia and in the context of an across-the-board modernization of its military equipment, I would argue that the United States can and should think about countering the military capabilities of the missiles using the full range of US military capabilities. In other words, we need not think that the only response to their violation is to pursue the same type of system that they are now fielding...although that is certainly a possibility.

The first question the US government should address is how do we better protect our forces and our Allies directly from these missiles? We have some tactical air and missile defense systems in place in Europe, as do our Allies, but I believe that there should be active consideration of increasing those capabilities. Cruise missile defense is an issue that the US military has not focused on as much as I think is warranted given this and other developments worldwide, and a real push in that area is needed.

Even with increased defensive capabilities, no air and missile defense system can keep up with the number of offensive missiles Russia might choose to field.

While we might be able to protect certain discreet locations, the answer cannot be only defense. The United States and its allies must look to field systems into and around the region that can hold at risk key targets inside of Russia, including, but not limited to the violating systems. While it is tempting to think about just going after those particular missiles, that would be an unproductive and unnecessary path...in the end, this missile system is just one way they have of striking NATO territory. From a military perspective, we should not become so consumed by this one system that we either 1) think that the threat to NATO is gone if these missiles are destroyed (whether by Russia or by us); or 2) that the only way to ensure that Russia does not get an advantage by this deployment is to field a similar system of our own. We do not have to match Russian deployments in a tit-for-tat manner. We have a flexible and resilient set of conventional and nuclear capabilities that can respond to a range of threats, and that flexibility puts us in a good position to deal with growing Russian aggression.

In fact, the United States and our Allies have many ways that we can and do deter the Russian Military, and I would like to briefly highlight some of these ongoing initiatives. Since the Wales Summit in 2014, we have seen NATO Allies recognize a need to bring its forces to higher states of readiness with the Very High Readiness Joint Task Forces; invest more in defense overall; and position more forces on a rotational basis further east with NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence forces. The Alliance is once again becoming familiar with nuclear deterrence policy, doctrine, and capabilities so that it improves what some call its "nuclear IQ" and ensure that the full spectrum of its nuclear capabilities presents a credible deterrent to Russia or any other potential adversary. Unilaterally, the United States has enhanced its forward presence forces in Europe through the European Reassurance Initiative funds appropriated by Congress that allow for a larger rotational presence of armored forces in Europe than we have had in the recent past. These activities are in response to the overall changes in the security environment caused by aggressive and illicit actions on the part of Russia, which have included the development and deployment of a system that

violates an existing arms control treaty. And, these activities help to show that Russia's aggressive actions have caused a response that does not make Russia safer.

New Possibilities for US and Allied Response

The question now is what should we be doing to better position ourselves given the INF violation and other aggressive behaviors from Russia. I would argue there are some actions we can take to provide the United State with additional strike options and/or tangibly demonstrate that Russia's violation will make it less secure. When considering these options, however, we must realize that the overall goal has to strike the difficult balance between demonstrating to Russia that it cannot take its aggressive actions and expect that there is no response, with ensuring that any actions taken increase strategic stability not reduce it. I predict the issues I have discussed here today would be a part of any nuclear posture review from this Administration—a review that will be a critical part of any overall review of the defense program.

First, we could increase deployments of SSGNs in and around Europe. These submarines bring incredible capabilities to, and increase the net strike capacity of, US assets in the region.

Second, we could look to field unilaterally and in conjunction with NATO Allies broader and more sophisticated rocket artillery systems on the territory of our eastern Allies. These systems, like High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) and Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), do not violate the INF Treaty, and provide significant firepower to the Alliance that can range key locations and targets inside of Russia. Acquisition of these systems by our Allies would be a serious signal of their displeasure and a real boost to the operational capabilities of the Alliance.

Third, we could do whatever we can to speed up the deployment of the follow-on nuclear cruise missile (the Long-Range Standoff missile or LRSO) and quickly develop a conventional cruise missile variant. Nuclear and conventional air-launched cruise missiles have been around for decades and have been effective at enhancing strategic stability as well as providing the United States with important strike assets.

Fourth, we could transition the Air Force program office overseeing LRSO development into a joint program office to explore potential applications for a conventional cruise missile for other Services besides just the Air Force.

Finally, we could begin to consider what alternatives exist for us to develop or field a ground-launched cruise missile similar to the one Russia has developed and deployed. To be clear, I believe that exploring this would *not* be a violation of the INF treaty, nor would any of the other recommendations I have made, but Russia and even our Allies could see this as escalatory. However, if Russia decides to formally pull out of the treaty, or if the US government is compelled to make the decision that the treaty is, in practice, dead, then I believe that it would be important to know what it would take for us to deploy a new missile to symmetrically counter the threat posed by Russia's system. We would have to work carefully with Allies on this alternative.

In fact, any effort will only be effective if we respond as a cohesive alliance with real actions. A combined response is key for maintaining strategic stability as it shows our strength to Russia and proves that its efforts to weaken the Alliance are failing. One of the United State's most unique and important comparative advantages are the friendships we have earned. These alliances are critical to national security, and the security of the world in which we live. Russia understands this reality, which is why one of it's main objectives is to weaken, exploit fissures in, or ultimately even break the Alliance. We cannot let that happen. So, we cannot act unilaterally...but nor can NATO afford paralysis. And

while we may all find it frustrating at times, less than perfect action taken together as an Alliance is far better than what might be seen as the perfect response if it is executed unilaterally.

Conclusion

While I, like all of us, hope that Russia will admit that it has violated the INF Treaty and come back into compliance, as we always said in DoD, “hope is not a strategy.” I do believe that there is a chance that we can convince Russia that it is better off coming back into compliance with the Treaty, but up to this point, making that case to them through diplomacy has been ineffective, and I doubt that will change. As a result, I believe that the United States and our NATO Allies can and should take concrete actions across the diplomatic, economic, and military dimensions to make it clear to Russian decision makers that fielding their system will not give them any military or political advantage. In fact, the deployments would actually make Russia less safe by allowing and mandating that the Alliance take actions that Russia has professed not to want, for example more forces further east on NATO territory. Considering some of the additional military options listed above would have the dual advantage of more effective pressure on Russia to come back into compliance *AND* better position the Alliance to deal with the military threat should Russia scrap the INF Treaty permanently.

I appreciate the attention these Subcommittees have paid to this important issue. I also appreciate the chance to testify today in front of you, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have for me.