

# Why Arms Control A View from America

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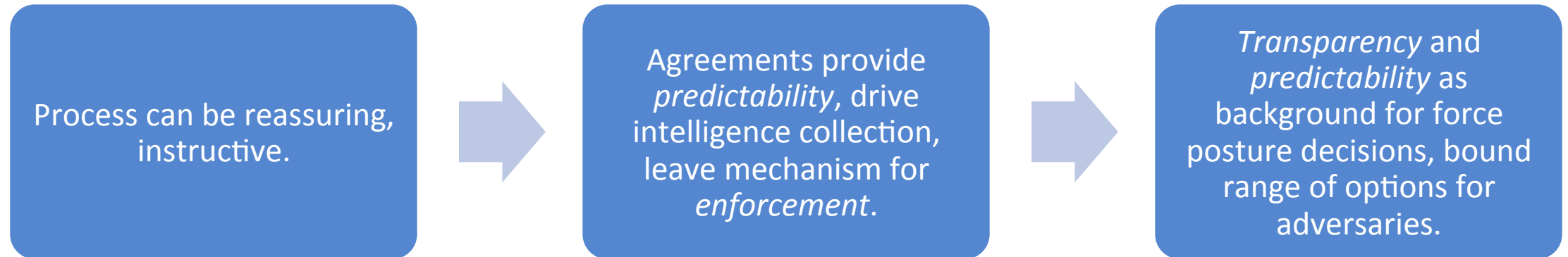
ISODARCO, Andalo, Italy

# Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

- Arms control is a means to achieving a national security objective.
- Contrary to conventional wisdom, nuclear arms control is not dead, but is under threat.
- Arms control has always been controversial, but will be more linked to partisan politics in the United States.
  - There was not magical time when we all agreed.

**Items in *Italics* are code, laden, complicated issues that need to be unpacked. History-rich.**

# Benefits of Arms Control



# Caveats

- Arms control is an unnatural act
  - Trying to maintain the ability to kill each other but agreeing to cooperate at the margins.
- The history of the nuclear age is filled with human efforts to bring logic and quantitative controls to a fundamentally subjective and largely illogical capability. True of *deterrence* theory, arms control, nuclear command and control.
- Very little of what we talk about is new, we are repeating past arguments and poorly. Mine the history to understand options for future progress.
- Trying to apply logic in Trump era impossible, leadership disconnected from nuclear and security bureaucracy. No reliability or continuity in thought.

# Arms Control Done Well



- Identify major threats to US national security
  - *Strategic stability* (nuclear vulnerability), *crisis stability* (flight time, threats to C3), etc
- Consider whether negotiated agreement can achieve positive outcome, reduce need, costs, risks of military or asymmetric response.
  - Can constraints be *effectively verified*? Costs, means, confidence.
- What form of agreement is possible, partners needs and demands.

# Why Arms Control Outlook is Dim

- No agreed US definition of what constitutes *strategic stability* and no agreement between US and Russia what constitutes *strategic stability*.
  - Protect *retaliatory capability*? Prevent nuclear use? Prevent conventional aggression?
- It is not just a partisan or ideological divide that threatens arms control, lack of process, thinking, consensus on what we seek to achieve.
- No engagement with Russian leadership.
  - Lack of negotiating process since 2010. Leadership engagement not useful, productive, trusted.

# Nuclear Arms Control

- LTBT/PTBT
- SALT and ABM
- SALT II
- INF
- START
- START II and III
- New START
- SALT and ABM forged agreement of *offense/defense* balance
- INF and START opened *on-site inspection*
- START II and III sought to manage doctrines

# American Nuclear Forces

- Pentad of Delivery Systems
  - ICBMs
  - Ballistic missile submarines
  - Strategic bombers with cruise missiles
  - Strategic bombers with gravity bombs
  - Tactical aircraft with gravity bombs
- Some 4000 active nuclear weapons, less than ½ deployed and operational at any time.
- Missions include: 1) *Deter aggression* 2) *reassure allies* 3) *damage limitation* should deterrence fail.



# Realities

- The US and Russia have not adopted arms control agreement that truly manage and redirect nuclear competition since START in 1991.
  - START II and III sought to do so, failed for multiple domestic and technical reasons.
- New START negotiated in haste due to expiration of START in 2009 and desire to maintain continuity of process and inspections.
  - Bush Admin left START with looming expiration (neglect or on purpose?)
- New START not going to be extended, may be killed outright.
- New Admin will arrive with no formal agreements in place, risk and opportunity.

# Back to Basics?

- What does the US worry about from Russia?
  - Overly concerned with matching capabilities, chasing Russia.
  - Tactical nuclear weapons, hyper-glide, other novel systems.
  - Doctrine in dispute, concern about lowering *threshold for nuclear use*.
  - Cyber and other threats to command and control, space assets.
  - Not all of these lend themselves to the bean-counting nature of arms control.
- What does Russia worry about from United States.
  - Conventional superiority in multiple realms.
  - NATO enlargement and encirclement.
  - *Splendid strike* capabilities, backed by global missile defenses.
- What are both sides not worried about enough?
  - Escalation risks, *crisis instability*, military incidents, leadership thinking and predictability.

# What Comes Next

- US withdraws from New START over military and IC objections.
- We can't agree if we are not if we are not talking to each other.
- Lost agreement on US nuclear modernization.
  - New START and commitment to modernize US nuclear forces linked, breaks down with Trump withdrawal.
- New thinking in Democratic Party.
  - Reduce spending on nuclear weapons, smaller arsenal.
  - *Reassurance* more about leadership than *shiny objects*.
  - *No First Use* as a growing consensus.

# Without US nuclear arms control fails

- US gets pressure because we are an open society. Politics of arms control will influence democratic party thinking, costs.
- US will return to arms control process with new Administration.
  - Treaty vs. unilateral action will depend on composition of new Congress on 2020.
- Russia will want credibility and status of being in a *nuclear peer relationship* with United States.
- New agreements may address only numbers or could begin to address doctrine and types (tactical weapons, missile defenses, conventional and hyper-glide).

# Forms of Arms Control

- America is a legalistic society.
  - Formal agreements, treaties have appeal.
  - Domestic political realities and failings may prevent.
- Unilateral actions more likely in post-Trump era.
- Bilateral with Russia more likely because of relations, risks, history.
- China has an interest in controls on US missile defenses (regional and global) which may provide avenue for engagement. Aversion to transparency, reliance on opacity a constraint.

# Arms Control and Disarmament

- Debate on NPT commitments and process of global disarmament will continue.
- Merger of arms control and nonproliferation communities may bring benefits for disarmament.
- US bureaucracy and military and public not serious about nuclear disarmament. Not a viable consensus without political leadership, driver.
- Minimal awareness or pressure from TPNW process in United States, but extended deterrent partners under pressure.
  - May lead to US reactions, some positive, negative.

# Conclusions

- Things will get worse before they get better.
- New START's destruction will open new paths for nuclear decision making in United States.
- Likely result in new US-Russian agreement in 2020s, content and form unknown.
- Lack of US strategic thinking and bilateral US-Russia strategic engagement a major constraint and risk.
- Opportunity to consider where next arms control moves leads.