



## The American College of National Security Leaders

November 6, 2018  
President Donald J. Trump  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We all belong to a non-partisan national security association whose members all served and retired as Ambassadors, Generals, Admirals, or were permanent members of the Senior Executive Service in a position relating to national security or foreign policy. We are writing out of concern for the present course of action on the U.S. withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Administration's policy on arms control. The INF Treaty is a bedrock to our current arms control regime and serves rather than hampers American interests. We acknowledge fully that Russia has been violating the INF Treaty with its deployment of new ground-based cruise missiles, but American withdrawal would permit Russia to further develop such weapons unchecked by any international norms of behavior.

President Reagan negotiated this treaty from a position of strength, combining a robust military buildup with strong diplomacy. While we applaud the Administration's commitment to re-building our military, absent a parallel diplomatic approach it is unlikely we will both protect our U.S. interests and overcome INF deficiencies. Rather than walking away from the agreement, we recommend your Administration instead prioritize resolving Russian violations through multifaceted efforts. There is no-doubt China must be included in this renewed effort and we encourage you to explore ways to bring them into the current INF treaty.

While we encourage employing the strongest possible negotiating tactics, we implore you to stop short of walking away from the INF treaty itself. America is at its best when we pair a strong and robust military with vigorous diplomacy. Your current military build-up allows you to negotiate from a position of strength and exploit a diplomatic opportunity. Successful resolution of INF deficiencies will advance the strategic interests of the United States, our allies and partners.

We also wish to voice our support for an extension of New START. Should this treaty expire, it will be the first time since 1972 that the US and Russia have not been bound by a binding arms control agreement. Due to long timelines associated with negotiating arms control agreements, we believe that the best course of action would be to extend New START an additional five years while concurrently engaging Russia on a new agreement that guarantees strategic stability through a rigorous verification process. The danger of nuclear weapons requires strong arms control to ensure strategic stability. Russian violations and Chinese independence argue for placing even greater priority and rigor on the existing arms control process - not less.

Sincerely,

Rear Admiral Sandy Adams, USN (Retired)  
Brigadier General Ricardo Aponte, USAF (Retired)  
Vice Admiral Donald Arthur, USN (Retired)  
Major General Donna Barbisch, USA (Retired)

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