

**Response by Thomas Graham, Jr. and Jonathan Granoff to  
Giles Raymond DeMourot on their *Newsweek* 2-25-19 op-ed**

After reading Mr. DeMourot's comments, we first want to express disappointment.

In a democratic society policy criticism is fair game, in fact it is a central tenet of democracy; with all due respect, alleging that we are inaccurate is one thing but "dishonest" is another. We beg to differ, especially since our assertion in the article was that allies are "expressing consternation" and this assertion is easily validated. We never said that there was uniform rejection or support.

Mr. DeMourot is simply wrong in his assessments of the consequences of withdrawal if he believes NATO allies will unambiguously line up with the decision. The reasons why we believe in our evaluation goes back to why the INF Treaty was created in the first place.

For years Europeans lived in anxiety over the growing Soviet threat represented by the Soviet SS-20 medium range ballistic missile force much of which ringed NATO—the remainder was deployed in Soviet Asia. This force ultimately reached over 400 deployed 5,000-kilometer range SS-20 missiles, each with three highly destructive nuclear warheads. The SS-20 was a most capable force which posed a very great threat to Europe.

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt gave voices to Europe's anxieties about this danger in his famous speech at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London in 1977 (<https://www.nytimes.com/1979/12/09/archives/warring-over-new-missiles-for-nato-missiles.html>) which placed the world on warning regarding the instability and dangers deployments of Soviet missiles posed.

These concerns led directly to the NATO Two Track Decision which then led to the INF negotiations in which President Ronald Reagan struck a deal with the Soviet Union to entirely eliminate the SS-20 force. And this force remains eliminated, legally prohibited.

Mr. DeMourot correctly cites the recent NATO statement which supports the US terminating the INF under the Treaty withdrawal clause. However, other important European voices speak differently:

The European Union spoke clearly:

*"The Treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces in Europe (INF) contributed to the end of the cold-war and constitutes a pillar of European security architecture since it entered into force 30 years ago.*

*Thanks to the INF Treaty, almost three thousand missiles with nuclear and conventional warheads have been removed and verifiably destroyed. The Treaty is also an important contribution to disarmament obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.*

*The United States and the Russian Federation need to remain engaged in constructive dialogue to preserve the INF Treaty and ensure its full and verifiable implementation which is crucial for Europe's and global security.*

*While we expect the Russian Federation to address serious concerns regarding its compliance with the INF Treaty in a substantial and transparent way, we also expect the United States to consider the*

*consequences of its possible withdrawal from the INF on its own security, on the security of its allies and of the whole world.*

*The world doesn't need a new arms race that would benefit no one and, on the contrary, would bring even more instability."*

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said:

*"The announcement by the United States that it intends to withdraw from the INF Treaty is regrettable. It poses difficult questions for us and for Europe. For 30 years, the INF Treaty, which prohibits Russia and the United States from possessing and testing ground launch intermediate-range missiles, has been an important pillar of our European security architecture. It is therefore hugely important, particularly for us in Europe.*

*We have several times called on Russia to answer and clarify the serious allegations it has violated the INF Treaty. To date, it has not done so. We also ask the United States to consider the possible impact of its decision. Ending the Treaty would have many negative consequences, not the least for the New Start Treaty, which we urgently need if we are to safeguard our achievements in nuclear disarmament beyond 2021."*

President Macron months ago (October 2018) clearly stated his objections regarding a hasty US unilateral action to terminate the Treaty: <https://uk.ambafrance.org/France-reminds-US-of-nuclear-treaty-is-importance>: *"We call on all the parties to avoid any hasty unilateral decisions, which would be regrettable."*

And why would Europeans not be concerned—an updated SS-20 force could come back to threaten Europe if the legal bar is lifted. An enhanced cruise force must not be ignored but not at the cost of lifting the bar on medium range nuclear ballistic missiles as well. What was done once could be done again.

On the other point raised by Mr. DeMourot, the withdrawal process, he cites the NATO statement correctly but that is beside the point. To use the Treaty Withdrawal Clause, a withdrawing party is supposed to state that remaining a party to the Treaty would "jeopardize its supreme interests". That is the correct procedure under this provision: yet nowhere is it stated what supreme interest is jeopardized or how it is jeopardized under the Treaty.

With respect to moving ahead, we agree with Foreign Minister Maas:

*"The Cold War times have passed. We don't need a rearmament debate, we need a debate about disarming. We cannot answer today's security questions with the deterrence ideologies from last century...Even if we are unable to save the INF Treaty, we cannot allow the result to be a renewed arms race. We cannot establish peace and security against one another, only with one another....European security will not be improved by deploying more nuclear-armed, medium-range missiles. I believe that is the wrong answer." —Heiko Maas, Germany's Foreign Minister in a Spiegel Online interview, [Jan. 11, 2019](#)*

Ambassador (ret) Thomas Graham, Jr. and Jonathan Granoff