



# **ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATION ACADEMY**

## **Options for Mutual Gains in Arms Control**

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**Memorandum for Rose Gotemoeller, International Advisory Board Member of ACONA**

**To:** Rose Gottemoeller, the International Advisory Board of ACONA

**Subject:** Options for Mutual Gains in Arms Control

**From:** Snaefridur Grimsdottir, Jordan Hibbs, Sayaka Shingu, Anna Wagner

Note: The views presented in this document are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the organizations or institutions of which the authors are affiliated.

***Introduction***

In 2022, the New START Treaty<sup>i</sup> is the only bilateral nuclear arms control agreement that still exists between the U.S. and Russia. Presidents Biden and Putin launched a strategic stability dialogue to lay the groundwork for future arms control and risk reduction.<sup>ii</sup> The US and the PRC have discussed strategic risks and the importance of continued engagement.<sup>iii</sup> The rise of great power competition has increased the need for reducing the risk of armed conflict and the threat of nuclear war. The ZOPA<sup>iv</sup> for a trilateral approach on the future of arms control is quite narrow when considering all parties' interests and positions. A more plausible approach is parallel bilateral talks between the parties with the aim of creating meaningful dialogue on arms control.

***Interests & Positions: U.S.-Russia***

While suspended in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the bilateral Strategic Stability Dialogue aims to reduce the risk of nuclear war, lay the groundwork for future arms control and discuss risk reduction measures. In a recent statement, the U.S. stated that the U.S. will look to: (1) capture new kinds of intercontinental-range nuclear delivery systems not currently limited by the New START Treaty, (2) address all nuclear warheads, including non-strategic nuclear weapons and non-deployed warheads, and (3) retain limits on Russian intercontinental-range ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments after New START expires in 2026.<sup>v</sup>

Russia sees the continuation of the strategic weapons agreement approach to arms control as the main outcome for successful negotiations as well as inclusion of conventional weapons as part of strategic stability.<sup>vi</sup> In addition, Russia has repeatedly voiced its concerns about missile defense (MD) systems, particularly in Europe.<sup>vii</sup> Russia has proposed a mutual moratorium on the deployment of land-based intermediate- and shorter-range missiles and coordinating mutual measures to verify compliance with them.<sup>viii</sup>

***Interests & Positions: U.S.-the PRC***

The 2010 and 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Reviews (NPR)<sup>ix</sup> stated the United States' intent for establishing a dialogue with the PRC. Under the Trump administration, the U.S. invited the PRC

to join the U.S.-Russia talks on trilateral nuclear arms control. In 2021, under the Biden administration, the U.S. is seeking to engage China bilaterally on ways to manage strategic risk.<sup>x</sup> The United States has expressed its concern over the PRC's nuclear and missile force's build-up and it has become one of the most pressing issues for the U.S.<sup>xi</sup> The U.S. has also called on the PRC for increased transparency measures, for example, in nuclear stockpile numbers.<sup>xii</sup>

The PRC's official stance has been that the PRC will not join an official agreement unless the U.S. and Russia reduce their nuclear arsenals on par with the PRC.<sup>xiii</sup> Russia expressed that they will not pressure the PRC into joining an agreement unless Beijing considers it to be in their national interest.<sup>xiv</sup> The PRC has likewise emphasized that the U.S. and Russia should create verifiable, irreversible, and legally-binding conditions for nuclear disarmament.<sup>xv</sup> The PRC has supported the Russian proposal to have a dialogue on nuclear doctrine and strategic risk reduction among the five NPT-recognized nuclear weapon states as part of the P5 process. Furthermore, the PRC has insisted on regulating MD capabilities and opposed the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>xvi</sup>

***Options for mutual gain across the three parties***

Arms control itself is not an ultimate goal. It is a tool to build confidence and avoid miscalculation and miscommunication. Mutual gains of a successful arms control arrangement for all three parties include enhanced transparency, increased predictability, and avoiding an arms race. Political will and trust between the involved parties will also be key to bringing Russia, the PRC, and the U.S. to the negotiation table. The final following suggestions are based on the ZOPA options for a dialogue on arms control:

***1. For the U.S. and Russia:***

Negotiations on strategic weapons in the form of an agreement, similar to the New START Treaty, will remain the best option moving forward. One of the potential future topics for mutual gains between Russia and the U.S. is to discuss outer space issues. In addition, outer space is likely a topic of interest for the PRC. One of the starting points for the dialogue can be the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons. Furthermore, a dialogue on the ground launched intermediate-range missiles could be a starting point to move towards other types of non-strategic weapons, while taking into account security implications for U.S. allies, both in Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

***2. For the U.S. and the PRC:***

The U.S. and the PRC could initiate an informal political dialogue on security that includes arms control and strategic stability. The purpose of the dialogue would be to establish a mutual understanding of crisis management in order to avoid conflict escalation, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. The U.S. needs to closely cooperate with its allies since any decision made during such a dialogue has the potential to affect regional security. Scientific and technical discussions at an expert level, including verification arrangements, could serve as another confidence building measure. Initiating these

dialogues requires political commitments and leaders' awareness of the value of technical aspects of arms control.

## **The Authors**

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<sup>i</sup> The Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms

US Department of State, “On the Extension of the New START Treaty with the Russian Federation,” Press Statement, Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., February 3, 2021. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/on-the-extension-of-the-new-start-treaty-with-the-russian-federation/>

<sup>ii</sup> The White House, “U.S.-Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability,” Washington, D.C., June 16, 2021. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/16/u-s-russia-presidential-joint-statement-on-strategic-stability/>; US Department of State, “Deputy Secretary Sherman to Lead U.S. Delegation in Strategic Stability Dialogue with Russian Federation,” Geneva, July 23, 2021. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/deputy-secretary-sherman-to-lead-u-s-delegation-in-strategic-stability-dialogue-with-russian-federation/>

<sup>iii</sup> White House, Readout of President Biden’s Virtual Meeting with President Xi Jinping of the People’s Republic of China, Statement and Releases, November 16, 2021. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/11/16/readout-of-president-bidens-virtual-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>; White House, “Background Press Call by Senior Administration Officials on President Biden’s Virtual Meeting with President Xi of the People’s Republic of China,” Press Briefings, November 16, 2021. Available at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefingroom/press-briefings/2021/11/16/background-press-call-by-senior-administration-officials-on-president-bidens-virtual-meeting-with-president-xi-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2/>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “President Xi Jinping Had a Virtual Meeting with US President Joe Biden,” November 16, 2021. Available at:

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/202111/t20211116\\_10448843.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202111/t20211116_10448843.html). <sup>iv</sup> Zone of possible agreement, the range in a negotiation in which two or more parties can find common ground.

<sup>v</sup> US Department of State, “Remarks to the 2021 NATO Nuclear Policy Symposium,” Washington D.C., November 3, 2021. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/remarks-to-the-2021-nato-nuclear-policy-symposium/>

<sup>vi</sup> Embassy of Russian Federation in the USA, “Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov took part in the annual meeting of the International Advisory Council of James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies - CNS of Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey,” October 25, 2021. Available at:

[https://washington.mid.ru/en/presscentre/news/russian\\_ambassador\\_to\\_the\\_united\\_states\\_anatoly\\_antonov\\_took\\_part\\_in\\_the\\_annual\\_meeting\\_of\\_the\\_inter/](https://washington.mid.ru/en/presscentre/news/russian_ambassador_to_the_united_states_anatoly_antonov_took_part_in_the_annual_meeting_of_the_inter/)

<sup>vii</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s interview given to Channel One’s Bolshaya Igra (Great Game) talk show, Moscow, April 1, 2021,” Moscow, April 1, 2021. Available at: [https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4662534](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4662534); Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, “Press Release on the future of New START,” Moscow, January 20, 2021. Available at:

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<sup>viii</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Comment by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on US and British plans to deploy land-based intermediate- and shorter-range missiles,” Moscow, April 5, 2021. Available at: [https://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4664612?p\\_p\\_id=101\\_INSTANCE\\_cKNonkJE02Bw\\_languageld=en\\_GB](https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4664612?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageld=en_GB)

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, “Comment by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on US and British plans to deploy land-based intermediate- and shorter-range missiles,” Moscow, April 5, 2021. Available at:

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<sup>ix</sup> US Department of Defense, 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, February 2010. Available at:

[https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/defenseReviews/NPR/2010\\_Nuclear\\_Posture\\_Review\\_Report.pdf](https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/defenseReviews/NPR/2010_Nuclear_Posture_Review_Report.pdf) and US Department of Defense, 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, February 2018. Available at:

<https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF>

<sup>x</sup> The Brookings Institute, “Readout from the Biden-Xi virtual meeting: Discussion with National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan,” Washington, D.C., November 16, 2021. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/events/readout-from-the-biden-xivirtual-meeting-discussion-with-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan/>

<sup>xi</sup> Department of Defense, “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China,” Washington, D.C., November 3, 2021. Available at:

<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>

<sup>xii</sup> US Department of State, Remarks to

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the NATO Nuclear Symposium, Washington, D.C., November 3, 2021. Available: <https://www.state.gov/remarks-to-the-2021-nato-nuclear-policy-symposium/>

<sup>xiii</sup> China has emphasized that the US and Russia should “fulfill their special and primary responsibilities in nuclear disarmament,” in a way “to create conditions for the ultimate comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament and further substantively slash their nuclear stockpile in a verifiable, irreversible and legally-binding way to create conditions for the ultimate comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament.” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Briefing by FU Cong, Director General of the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament of Ministry of Foreign Affairs,” Beijing, August 6, 2021. Available at: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjbxw/t1686559.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1686559.shtml) <sup>xiv</sup> Reif and Bugos, “No Progress Toward Extending New START,” Arms Control Association, July/August 2020, Available at: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-07/news/progress-toward-extending-new-start> <sup>xv</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian’s regular Press

Conference on June 17, 2021,” Beijing, June 17, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cohk/eng/Topics/fyrbt/t1884561.htm>

<sup>xvi</sup>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Uphold Multilateralism to Promote Common Security Remarks by H.E. Wang Yi State Councilor and Foreign Minister of The People’s Republic of China at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva,” Geneva, June 11, 2021. Available at: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjb\\_663304/wjbz\\_663308/2461\\_663310/t1883190.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/2461_663310/t1883190.shtml)