

Defence Committee

Oral evidence: Consequences for UK Defence of INF withdrawal, HC 1734

Wednesday 12 December 2018

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Members present: Dr Julian Lewis (Chair); Martin Docherty-Hughes; Ruth Smeeth; John Spellar; Phil Wilson.

Questions 63-114

Witness

I: Hon. Franklin C. Miller KBE, Principal, The Scowcroft Group

Examination of witness

Witness: Hon. Franklin C. Miller KBE.

Q63 **Chair:** Good morning and welcome to our second oral evidence session on the consequences for the United Kingdom of the possible United States' withdrawal from the intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty. It is a pleasure to welcome as our expert witness today Frank Miller, from the United States. Frank, although you are very well known in this field, would you mind just saying a few words about your background for context?

Mr Miller: Thank you, Chairman. I am retired from the US Government, after 31 years of service. Of those 31 years, 22 years were spent in the Office of the Secretary of Defence, doing nuclear policy, and four years were spent as a special assistant to George W. Bush in the White House, where my assignment was defence policy and arms control.

In British fashion, I should declare an interest in the topic, because I have been involved in NATO nuclear policy and US nuclear policy throughout my Government service and after Government service. I have a passion for and an interest in what we are to discuss.

Chair: And you are too modest to mention it, but you hold an honorary knighthood from the United Kingdom for your work in this field.

Mr Miller: Yes.

Chair: Thank you. Phil will begin the questioning.

Q64 **Phil Wilson:** Good morning. Why was the INF treaty necessary at the time, and what is its relevance today?

Mr Miller: Those are two very good and different questions, but there is a striking parallel. In the '70s, the Soviet intermediate-range systems were old rockets called SS-4s and 5s. They were fixed launchers, which meant that a truck had to go out into the field, set one on a concrete stand, fill it with fuel and then launch it, so they would be vulnerable if NATO found the missiles out there.

The Soviets made a decision sometime in the mid-70s to replace that system with a mobile, solid-rocket MIRVed system; MIRVed meant three warheads. I think that at the time that was an entirely rational decision in the context. Why not? MIRVs were coming in; mobiles were the right thing.

That said, two things happened. One was that Chancellor Schmidt of Germany decided that because the United States and the Soviet Union were capped in terms of strategic forces at the SALT level, NATO had no counterpart to the SS-20, and that deployment of SS-20s might in fact sever the deterrent connection between NATO and the United States—



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between the European part of NATO and the United States and Canada. So Schmidt called for some sort of approach to deal with the SS-20s.

The other thing that happened was this, and I will give this document to your Clerk. It is from Secretary Weinberger's fiscal report to Congress for fiscal year 1985, dated February 1984. When NATO began to evidence concern about the SS-20 system, the Soviet deployments went from like that to like this—they pressed very hard. NATO made the decision in '79, after considerable political angst, to have a two-track decision: first, to have systems to counter the SS-20, but also to offer an arms-control track to make it easier to perhaps eliminate or reduce those systems. The Chairman here was involved in some of the work involved in the deployment of US cruise missiles to Greenham Common.

The reason was to eliminate this threat in those days, and of course the treaty in '87 did eliminate all the INF systems throughout the world, but there was an attempt by the Soviets to do this only in western Europe, which the United States rejected because our Japanese allies would have been very upset. We find ourselves in a similar position today, where New START essentially caps the US and Russia at the traditional strategic systems level, but the Russian Government made a cynical decision sometime in 2008 or so that they needed to break out of the treaty—that they needed to have a treaty-busting weapon. One can speculate as to why they decided to do that. They had first approached the United States Government in the George W. Bush Administration on multiple occasions to ask, "Can't we both get out of this treaty?" and that was rebuffed. So the treaty remained in force and the Russians went out to develop, covertly, and ultimately field the SSC-8 cruise missile, which violates the treaty.

Q65 Phil Wilson: You are saying that, in the 1970s, the Soviets had intermediary weapons that were sort of obsolete, and you think it was a rational decision from their perspective to update them. Do you think updating those weapons in the last few years is a rational decision as well?

Mr Miller: In the 1970s there was no treaty prohibiting the research, development and fielding of intermediate-range systems. There is today a treaty—in tatters—that prevents them from doing that. The fact that their programme for the SSC-8 cruise missile was conducted covertly means that it was a deliberate decision by the Russian Government to defy the treaty and to go off in such a manner that it would not be detected, if at all possible, by western intelligence. Thankfully, western intelligence did detect that, and the Committee has been provided with that information. From 2013 on, the Obama Administration and later the Trump Administration engaged the Russians and said, "This is a violation," and the Russian Government responded, as did the Soviet Government, by denying that the violation occurred and accusing the United States of already having violated the treaty, which is a specious comment.

Q66 Phil Wilson: Would there have been a treaty without the pressure applied by deployments of American missiles in Europe in the 1980s?



Mr Miller: Absolutely not. The KGB had convinced the Soviet leadership that it could create enough chaos within the western European states and NATO to prevent the deployment of counter-systems. The Chairman is well familiar with what happened at Greenham Common. As it turned out, NATO maintained its cohesion and the United States deployed 108 Pershing II ballistic missiles in Germany, an upgrade of an existing system. The Kremlin leadership then looked at them and said, "It's a six-minute flight time from the launch of a Pershing II to Moscow." The Soviets also miscalculated the range. They thought the systems were of sufficient range to hit the underground command bunkers that had been built south of Moscow, and in their eyes it was a huge threat to the continuity of a Soviet regime during wartime, so eventually they came back to the table. Without the counter-deployments of ground-launched cruise missiles, especially Pershing II, there would have been no INF treaty. I was peripherally involved in that at the time.

Q67 **Chair:** I quoted from Gorbachev's memoirs at an earlier hearing, so I will not do it again today, when he condemned the folly of his predecessors in deploying the SS-20s, which directly led to the Pershing IIs, which he regarded as a mortal threat. If anyone is interested, it is pages 442 to 444 of Gorbachev's memoirs in the English edition.

I would like to take you back to one interesting point you made about the present. You said that the Russians openly approached the Americans to say, "Can we both get out of this treaty?" The fact that they did that openly means, presumably, that they gave reasons for that. If they did not give reasons, can we ascribe reasons as to why they might have wanted to ditch the treaty; and in particular, given that the treaty applies to the creation of these missiles, which are banned at the moment anywhere in the world, could it be the case that the Russians made their approach, not because they wanted to reintroduce these missiles to Europe, but because they wanted to have a free hand to introduce them to other theatres, against other potential adversaries who are not bound by the treaty? Did they say anything about that?

Mr Miller: To my knowledge, there was only one of those—to Rumsfeld. Sergei Ivanov believes they did not.¹ I think your assumption, Chairman, that they felt that the Russian military felt a lack of target coverage led to the decision to build these things. We often read that it is not about the West; it is about China. The deployments to date have occurred in western Russia against NATO, not against China.

Q68 **Chair:** What is the best information you can give us in an open session about the deployment of these new missiles?

Mr Miller: Not yet against China.

Q69 **Chair:** They are not deployed in other theatres; they are deployed in a way that would menace NATO area but nowhere else in particular?

¹ Rumsfeld and Ivanov had discussions multiple times, however the witness was present for one of those meetings. Ivanov did not advance a reason for his dissatisfaction with the treaty.



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Mr Miller: I would say yes.

- Q70 **John Spellar:** Frank, you mentioned the KGB having assured the Russian leadership that they could create sufficient chaos. Would I be right in presuming that is through civil organisations and through disinformation campaigns?

Mr Miller: Absolutely.

- Q71 **John Spellar:** To what extent is that on the public record? I don't mean your comments; I mean the information from the agencies.

Mr Miller: The United States, and indeed NATO, does a very poor job at putting out information. It has not done very well since the end of the Cold War. The same is true of Brussels, as a NATO alliance, and I think of many of the NATO Governments. We have rejected the false Russian claims that we have violated the treaty, but the Russian drumbeat on this is constant. You have a series of things. You have Lavrov and his minions saying, "We really want to stay in the treaty. Why is the US getting out?" Interesting. That either means that Lavrov and Ryabkov, and Antonov in Washington, are lying; or, more presumably, they have not been told what the Russian military does. There is a wonderful story from SALT I about the Russian military not wanting the Foreign Ministry to know what the Russian forces were like.

The other thing is Putin having the audacity to say, "Well, if the West does something about this, we will have to counter-deploy." They are already deploying the SSC-8; that is a fact. So there is no western system that they are countering. They have broken the treaty: they are out there deploying the SSC-8.

- Q72 **John Spellar:** Going back to the SS-20 episode, when clearly there was a large movement across Europe against countermeasures, to what extent have revelations about the involvement of Russian agencies in that been on the public record?

Mr Miller: It has been on the record; it has not been remarked upon in any major way.

- Q73 **Chair:** On that point, isn't it true to say that the KGB, as it was then, has a long record of trying to claim credit for beneficial things happening in the West from its point of view, when they would have happened anyway? For example, they had their tame anti-nuclear organisations in the West, but they were only too happy to claim credit for the upsurge in anti-nuclear activity which for the most part was nothing to do with their efforts to stir it up, although they were very happy to see it happen and very happy to put out information that could be taken up by those movements.

Mr Miller: They can light fires; some of those fires actually catch. In a parallel—I will give this to the Clerk—this is a page from Weinberger's report. The reason I brought it up is that the chart graphs the number of SS-20 deployed and statements by official Soviet sources back in those days. In December '79, when NATO made its decision to begin to deploy



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ground-launched cruise and Pershing, Brezhnev said that "a balance of forces has taken shape in Europe." So it is 100 to zero. In 1982, when there are 200 SS-20s, Brezhnev says, "There is approximate equality now". There are still no Pershings and GLCMs. In August '82, Ustinov, the Defence Minister, says, "There is approximate parity of forces today." There were 315 SS-20s and no NATO deployments. Then, in April of '83, TASS says, "Currently existing parity", at which point there were 351 SS-20s and no NATO systems, which were just coming. I will leave this for the Clerk.

Today, you find Putin saying, "We'll have to counter-deploy", when there are SSC-8s in the field and no western systems. In fact, Putin continues to say, "When the West starts to deploy a counter-system, Russia will target those countries." National Security Adviser Bolton made clear a couple of weeks ago that the United States does not plan to deploy nuclear-tipped systems in NATO to offset that threat; that that will be done in other ways.

Chair: We'll be coming on to that.

Mr Miller: My point is that the social media and the SVR and Putin continue to say, "Well, when the Americans deploy their new systems, we will target you." That spins up the anti-nuclear movements across western Europe.

Q74 **John Spellar:** What motivation would you ascribe to the Russians' actions in violating the treaty?

Mr Miller: It must have been a very serious case that the Russian military made to Putin. My suspicion—not based on intelligence, because I don't think we know—is that the Russian military felt that the caps it was under in New START precluded it from having sufficient target coverage both to the west and to the east, and that this new system would provide them with additional warheads to carry out those missions. That is a guess.

Q75 **John Spellar:** To what extent are these views shared by NATO allies, apart from, obviously, the keen interest of the US?

Mr Miller: What I have just said about the reason? I've only discussed that with a few allied countries' representatives, so my sample size is too small.

Q76 **John Spellar:** What about the NATO allies' reaction to the facts of this new deployment?

Mr Miller: You have the statement made on 4 December by the NATO Foreign Ministers at Brussels. That statement said that the Russians are in material breach of the treaty. There is full acknowledgment by all the NATO Foreign Ministers that Russia is in material breach of the treaty through its actions.

Q77 **John Spellar:** Would that be the meeting last week of the NATO Foreign Ministers?

Mr Miller: Yes, on 4 December.

Q78 **John Spellar:** When the US Government gradually became aware of the violations, what was their reaction? How did they respond?

Mr Miller: The allies? How did the allies respond or the US Government?

John Spellar: The US Government.

Mr Miller: You have the chronology. The US has been engaging the Russians since 2013. The Russian response has always been to deny that there was any sort of violation whatsoever. The Russian response was also to try to elicit from the American side more information: "What are you talking about? Where did you find this system?" They were trying to get from us the intelligence means that allowed us to detect this violation.

Finally, when we gave them the designator of the system, they admitted that there was such a system but it had a shorter range and did not violate the treaty. As you will have seen in the statement by the Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, the way this system was tested was deliberately deceptive to allow them to have a treaty-busting system that appeared to be a compliant system.

Q79 **Chair:** So, how do we know, if they have only ever tested it at presumably too short a range to break the provisions of the treaty? How do we know that it has got a capacity that would put it in breach of the treaty?

Mr Miller: Tested from a fixed launcher at greater than treaty range. That is allowable if the system were to be deployed on aircraft or naval systems, which are not covered by the INF treaty. That same system, however, has been deployed in a ground mobile mode, which is a treaty violation.

Q80 **Chair:** Just to be absolutely clear, the air systems and the submarine-launched systems are not covered in any way.

Mr Miller: Correct.

Q81 **Chair:** That, of course—and we may discuss this later—gives the US a possibility of countering this deployment if it is considered necessary, by using air-launched or submarine-launched missiles, which would not violate the treaty.

Mr Miller: Right.

Q82 **Chair:** We will probably come back to that, but I am a bit puzzled by what you said about the Russians thinking that they might have "insufficient target coverage", given that the whole of the NATO area has presumably been subject to nuclear target coverage by the Russians over many years. I remember that one of the arguments about the SS-20s was that they were so much more accurate than their predecessors, and it was not so much a question of them being used against cities, which could be targeted anyway, but they could be used against NATO infrastructure without causing phenomenal numbers of casualties. That would mean



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that NATO powers would be faced either with surrendering or escalating to all-out nuclear warfare against large numbers of people. Surely that does not apply anymore, because the other longer range systems that the Russians have must presumably be accurate enough to cover any sort of target. What are the target gaps? What type of targets is this new system meant to cover that are not covered already?

Mr Miller: I wish I knew the answer to that question. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that I wish we, the US Government, knew the answer to that question, but we don't. One can only deduce—we are left to deducing—that the Russian military wanted more warheads, and they wanted those warheads in a ground-launch mode. They are already, as you alluded to, deploying large numbers of sub-strategic air and naval launch weapons. One is left to ask your question, but without a sufficient answer.

Q83 Chair: This is presumably a crucial point. Basically, the missiles are simply adding to the total warhead arsenal that the Russians have. There is no obvious use to which they could be put that could not be covered by other missiles in their armoury. However, obviously the overall total will be going up, and that would perhaps be the consideration.

Mr Miller: I will give you a hypothetical. If you are a Russian target planner and for some reason you believe that the number of targets that you have in the United States and China has grown, which takes more of your strategic forces, your ability to use strategic forces at less than strategic range goes away, because those warheads are called for elsewhere. So you build new warheads to cover western Europe or closer targets than China. Again, this is western planners mirror-imaging what a Russia military planner would do.

Q84 Chair: So the theory would be that the purpose of deploying those intermediate range missiles in Europe would be to release longer range missiles for use further afield.

Mr Miller: That is my theory.

Q85 Ruth Smeeth: What is your view on the Russian counter-allegations about American violations?

Mr Miller: Completely false. It stretches credulity to breaking point that the United States, having built missile defence systems in Poland and Romania, and whose purpose is to have anti-missile missiles, would somehow be able to smuggle in Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles, without ever testing them in that mode, and with the Poles, the Romanians and the press not knowing about it. That we would covertly do that in countries where there is still free press—it stretches credulity. If you take the notion, "Oh by the way, they are going to have nuclear warheads on those Tomahawk cruise missiles"—we are not that good. You cannot ascribe that many covert actions in one box, and expect it to happen.

Q86 Ruth Smeeth: Do you think America should be doing more to deal with this verbal attack?



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Mr Miller: I will take a controversial point of view. I think that this situation presents two related but segregable issues. The first is that the Russians have broken the treaty. The calls to save the INF treaty are without merit because a treaty binds two parties to carry out conduct in a certain way. When one of those parties has departed from the agreement, then it is not a treaty, it is unilateral restraint. The Russian Government deliberately did that. It was time for the Russian Government, after five years of failed negotiations, to be called on that.

The next question is does this require a military response? One thing Mr Putin would like us to do, which Bolton has made clear we will not do, is to try to deploy new nuclear systems in Europe. Putin would love to break the NATO alliance. That kind of a debate, particularly at NATO with 29 nations, would break the alliance, so we are not going to do that.

The other question—this is my personal view—is what are we trying to deter? We are trying to deter Putin from believing that he could use this system, or any other shorter range system, in small numbers, to win a conventional war by escalating. In my view, the nuclear posture review that the United States Defence Department released in February this year, which calls for the deployment of a small number of low-yield Trident warheads, is the answer to this system. That is, to say to Mr Putin, “Do not believe that you can use nuclear weapons with impunity, because the risk of escalation becomes too high.” Rather than expending large sums of money and political capital, to build a new nuclear system that would be sea-based, I think we have something, which will be fielded within a year or so, that provides a perfect answer. There is another question, which I can get into if the Committee wishes, about conventional long-range weapons in the Pacific, but that is different.

Q87 **John Spellar:** In the Russian position, is that the doctrine of escalate to de-escalate?

Mr Miller: It has been so described—

John Spellar: Or escalate to win.

Mr Miller: The nuclear posture review is a very clear statement of the deterrent problem. The Russians have, over the past 10 years, invested heavily in deploying low-yield, shorter range systems. The doctrine says that we should use these if we are losing a conventional battle, and it has been practiced in exercises. You have the systems in the field, the doctrine and the exercises. The nuclear posture review says that Mr Putin has to be convinced under all conditions that it is too dangerous for him to resort to nuclear weapons.

Q88 **Chair:** What is the current situation in relation to NATO having tactical theatre nuclear weapons deployed?

Mr Miller: There are a small number of gravity bombs with dual capable aircraft in four NATO countries. The Belgians, the Dutch, the Germans and the Italians play a part in that role, along with some aircraft from US Air Forces in Europe. There are two modernisation programmes going on in



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that regard. The first is to replace the bomb, which is called a B61 in US nomenclature. It is a 1960s vintage weapon, which still has vacuum tubes. It is being replaced by what is called the B61-12, which will be deployable in about 18 months' time, and which has modern electronics. The aircraft that NATO has are F-15s, F-16s and Tornados. As the Committee well knows, those are vintage aircraft as well. As NATO moves forward to put F-35s into the field—aircraft with stealth capabilities and a higher probability to penetrate—NATO's ability to have some sort of a theatre-based deterrent is enhanced, but again, we are talking about very small numbers.

Q89 Chair: Remember, the INF treaty allows weapons up to the 500 km range. Does NATO have any of those?

Mr Miller: No. In the 1991 and 1992 presidential nuclear initiative—first signed by George H. W. Bush and Gorbachev, and then signed by George H. W. Bush and Yeltsin—both sides agreed to get rid of all ground-launched tactical nuclear weapons, period. The United States did so with alacrity. The Russian Federation never completely did so and has now built up its arsenal with a ballistic missile called the SS-26 Iskander and with this new SSC-8.

Q90 Chair: Just to get the picture clear then, at the moment the Russians have introduced a ground-launched cruise missile, which breaches the treaty, between 500 km and 1,500 km.

Mr Miller: 5,500 km.

Chair: And NATO has not got anything of that sort. Also, Russia has always maintained ground-based systems of a shorter range than that, and NATO got rid of all of those.

Mr Miller: Yes.

Q91 Ruth Smeeth: I wanted to move on to how the US Administration are dealing with the change in circumstance. Specifically, do you think their current actions are a departure from usual practice in US arms control?

Mr Miller: No, I do not think it is a departure. After five years of fruitless diplomacy, which began when the Russian system was still in its early stages of development, and which has now seen the deployment of several battalions of the Russian system, it was time to recognise the reality that the diplomacy was getting nowhere.

As I said earlier, the treaty has been killed by the cynical actions of the Russian Administration. I read these op-eds—the most recent was by Gorbachev and the American Secretary of State under Reagan, George Shultz—saying, "Save the INF treaty". It is very difficult to save something when it has been totally violated by one side. The INF treaty, in my judgment, no longer exists. It now has unilateral restraint by the United States, which the United States might continue to observe, but not in the treaty context. There is no treaty.

Q92 Chair: Why would the treaty be worth saving? An awful lot of effort went



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into securing the treaty in the 1980s, as you said in your opening remarks. Originally, it was implicit in the dual-track approach in 1979, which was to deploy but keep dialogue going. It was then explicit in 1981 with the zero-option offer, which said, "If Russia gets rid of the SS-20s, SS-4s and SS-5s, we will not deploy." As we know, the Russians did not accept that, the deployments went ahead and the Russians walked away from the table, but less than two years later they came back and agreed the zero option. We put an awful lot of effort into getting it, so should we not be putting a lot of effort into trying to keep it alive, or at least restoring it? Do you think that, if there is some way in which Russia could be brought back into compliance, it would be a good thing to keep the treaty in existence?

Mr Miller: Aye, there is the rub, Chair. If I thought there was a way to bring the Russians back into compliance, that would be a good thing, but the Russians have violated the treaty and continue to deploy these systems, so diplomacy alone has failed.

As you pointed out, the reason the treaty came into existence in the first place was because NATO had agreed and moved out on a counter-deployment plan. There is no counter-deployment plan at this time. A full-up counter-deployment plan would likely split the alliance, so that kind of pressure on the Russian Government is unlikely to succeed. Therefore, we are in a deterrent situation, acknowledging that the Russians have destroyed the treaty.

Q93 **Chair:** But you agree that, if the treaty is eventually abrogated by everyone, that would be a loss for the international community.

Mr Miller: I think we were all better off without the Russians deploying a treaty-breaking system, but I have seen nothing that indicates that the Russians are in any way, manner or form prepared to come back into compliance with the treaty. They deny that they have violated it, so it is hard to say that it could be restored.

Q94 **Chair:** I am going to come on to what might be done in terms of counter-deployments in a moment, and I know Phil wants to come in, but I have one more question first. If the treaty fails—if it is basically torn up by the Americans as a result of it being violated by the Russians—and no doubt there will be a lot of blame allocation contests going on—what are the wider implications for arms control? What would the situation be with regard to other treaties between us and Russia? And for that matter, by using the system as you have speculated, to increase the number of overall missile warheads by reallocating longer range missiles to other theatres and leaving the new missiles to cover the European theatre, is Russia in breach of any other treaties that are in force?

Mr Miller: On the first point, again—I smile—I don't think the United States is abrogating the treaty. I think the United States is recognising that the Russian Government has fundamentally destroyed this treaty, and stating that, unless the Russians come back into compliance, the United States will formally withdraw because the treaty does not exist.



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Secondly, if I may, on your point about arms control, as we sit here the Russian Government is in violation of nine separate nuclear, nuclear-related or chemical or biological weapons-related treaties, including the Helsinki accords and the Budapest accord. I can go into them. The Helsinki Final Act says they are not supposed to violate the territory of any country in Europe. Under the Budapest accord they were supposed to respect the sovereignty of Ukraine. Under the Istanbul agreement they were supposed to remove their forces from the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and also from Moldova. The Presidential Nuclear Initiatives of 1991 and 1992 we have discussed. There is the Vienna document, where they provide false information about their military exercises in Europe. There is the Open Skies Treaty, where they do not allow western planes to fly the routes that have been declared. Sadly, as demonstrated here in the UK, there is the Chemical Weapons Convention, where they have used a chemical weapon in Salisbury. Then there is the INF treaty.

The only treaty that the Russians still subscribe to is the New START treaty. The Russian track record is that of a serial violator of arms control treaties. The Russians are perfectly happy to have those treaties exist and bind the West while they continue to violate them. Unless things change radically, the future for arms control with Russia is in peril due to the actions of the Russian Government. In private session, Chairman, I have an idea on New START, but I would rather keep that in private session if I might.

- Q95 **Chair:** At the moment, then, this addition of extra nuclear warheads is not of itself violating any other nuclear treaty?

Mr Miller: No.

Chair: Thank you.

- Q96 **Phil Wilson:** I have a quick question: I assume Gorbachev and former Secretary Shultz would know about the violations you have just mentioned. Why do you think they still want to keep the INF treaty?

Mr Miller: The INF treaty was quite a symbolic act by the United States, NATO and the Soviet Union, so there is reason to be attached to it, emotionally and psychologically. I would contest the notion that either Gorbachev or Shultz know of or understand the violation. All Gorbachev knows is that his Government says there is no violation. Shultz has no access to intelligence and evidently has chosen not to agree with the American Government's, and now the NATO Governments', intelligence assessments that the treaty has been broken.

- Q97 **Chair:** Let's move on, then, to the question of what NATO's response, if any, could be. Clearly, there is the theoretical possibility of NATO nations going back to the formula that was so hard won in the 1980s and saying, "If Russia is deploying ground-launched cruise missiles covering the European theatre, NATO could do likewise, while simultaneously carrying on a dialogue with Russia to get both lots of missiles removed." That would revive all the old divisions in western societies; in the end it would probably happen, but only after a lot of effort and grief. Is anybody



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actually suggesting that the response to what Russia is doing should be ground-launched cruise missiles, or any other form of ground-launched missiles, in Europe?

Mr Miller: No, no one. As I said, Mr Bolton made clear that there is no intention to seek to deploy new nuclear systems in NATO Europe. One could conceive of a different approach, which is to bolster NATO's conventional capability. One could conceive that one could put, say, Tomahawk cruise missiles, which one would then make certain were demonstrably non-nuclear—and allow whatever inspections were required—with US Army forces in Europe to provide a deep strike capability, to enhance NATO's ability to strike deeper into Russia, should that become necessary. That would be conventional, although INF treaty-breaking in its own way, because it is a ground-launched cruise; but that would be on the conventional side. There has been some talk of returning to the notion of arming nuclear cruise missiles on US Navy ships—US Navy submarines. That will take some time. I am not a particular fan of that idea.

Q98 **Chair:** Can I ask you why you are not a fan of that idea? Doesn't that seem a rather obvious way to respond, because in the case of ground-launched cruise missiles of any sort NATO can say till it's blue in the face that they are only conventionally armed, but there would be no way of demonstrating that; so I think that would very probably be extremely divisive for no great gain, but in relation to the submarine launch system I understand from the briefing that a single submarine could carry more than 100 missiles. Is that correct?

Mr Miller: A couple of points: the first is, respectfully, I disagree with the notion that one couldn't convince the world that a conventionally armed non-nuclear system was in fact that. One wouldn't have nuclear storage sites nearby. One could open the area for inspection by Russians, Americans—the Vatican guard, if one wanted to; but one could be very clear that there were no nuclear weapons present, and the US couldn't deploy a new nuclear system in NATO without getting the approval of all NATO nations, so I put that aside.

The United States has four converted Trident SSBNs, which carry about 140 cruise missiles. Those submarines will have to end service in the next 10 years or so, as they age out, just as the Vanguard class is ageing out. There is no plan to replace them as cruise missile submarines. In addition, the current version of the Tomahawk cruise missile is not certified to carry a nuclear warhead. We would have to bring old nuclear warheads out of storage and refurbish them, adding to a pretty long queue that the Department of Energy is already working on under the nuclear posture review. You have to modify the fire control systems, so that they are nuclear certified as well. I am not sure the game is worth the candle.

I go back to my fundamental proposition, which is to say to Mr Putin, "Don't. Do not use conventional forces to attack NATO and do not rely on nuclear forces to back up a conventional attack." With a highly credible deterrent based on NATO's strategic force low-yield Trident weapons, we



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will have an outstanding deterrent. The warhead counts, to me—as an old nuclear planner you would not expect me to say this—are not relevant at this point. To me, a credible threat to Mr Putin is the most relevant thing we have to do; whether he does it with air-launch cruise, short-range naval systems or SSC-8s—it is a good deterrent. The fact that he has violated a fundamental treaty of the Cold War is a different political matter.

Q99 Chair: Let us just explore these scenarios a little bit more; and then I will come to Martin, if I may. So you are trying to say that the threat posed by these new weapons systems is not so much any particular targets they might hit, but is in some way part of an overall intimidation strategy that might lead Russia to think it has achieved some sort of conventional advantage. Is that the idea?

Mr Miller: Well, Russian doctrine is to use conventional forces, in which they have superiority anywhere along the NATO-Russia border, to try to seize territory quickly; and should NATO reinforce and begin to push the Russians back, that is when we get to escalate to win.

Q100 Chair: Given that we have said that we think the purpose of the deployments of these nuclear weapons is largely or possibly to allow them to release their longer-range weapons for other targets, in what way does the coming of these new missiles, with their warheads, change the nuclear threat and the overall balance of power confronting NATO?

Mr Miller: I do not think it does. Again, I think NATO's credible deterrent is what counts. Telling Mr Putin that he can invest in these systems if he so chooses, but that they will gain him absolutely nothing except putting him in further danger, is the correct message.

Q101 Chair: Would you not think that any such advantage that they get from this—

We have not talked about the possibility, if there was a thought on the side of Russia, that anti-ballistic missile systems that might be able to protect NATO from some incoming attack would need to be overwhelmed. However, cruise missiles are not really the weapon of choice to do that, so that is not the reason.

It is more or less a psychological threat that we are talking about here. If we are in the business of trading psychological threats, without wishing to split the alliance by deploying ground-based systems, which would be controversial, surely the answer has to be to use a sea-based system or an air-based system. Can you outline for us the situation regarding American nuclear weapons and US base facilities in the United Kingdom? Could that be an answer to restoring the psychological balance?

Mr Miller: We used to have nuclear weapons stored in the United Kingdom, with aircraft committed to carrying them, as part of NATO's overall dual-capable aircraft force. We do not do that now. If Governments agreed, that could be another step towards further bolstering the airbase leg. The triad modernisation programme called for by the nuclear posture review will greatly revitalise the ageing elements of the US strategic



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nuclear forces. There will be new bombers and new long-range cruise missiles there.

However, the question in my mind comes back to deterrence. Can we say to our publics, credibly, that we have deployed sufficient firepower to say to Mr Putin: "Don't—just don't"? In my judgment, the kind of modernisation programme that we are pursuing in the triad is designed to do that. The Russians may conjure up nuclear war fighting. That is not our game. We do not believe in that.

Q102 Chair: What is the situation regarding US submarines in Britain? Holy Loch was always the base for them.

Mr Miller: In those days, the range of the Polaris A-1, A-2 and A-3 missiles was very short—I think 1,500 miles at the beginning and 2,500 miles with A-3. The range of the Trident system, as you well know, is immensely longer than that. The longer the range, the more ocean you have to patrol in. The more ocean you have to patrol in, the more impossible it is to find a ballistic missile submarine. That is why the Vanguard class, the Dreadnought class, the Ohio class and the Columbia class are such potent deterrents. Moving US forces closer and restricting their operating area, would, in my judgment—

Chair: Make them more vulnerable.

Mr Miller: It would not be militarily sound.

Q103 Chair: Except if you wanted to make a statement to Russia after they have deployed— Have we any idea what sort of number of these ground-launched cruise missiles that they have deployed that cover the European theatre?

Mr Miller: I do not know of any; unclassified numbers.

Chair: Lets us suppose that it was—

Mr Miller: Tens.

Q104 Chair: Tens. Surely in waging this psychological war of nerves and saying, "You're doing this. Okay, we're doing that. Don't think you're getting any advantage"—even if it is academic anyway when talking about numbers of nuclear warheads—what is to prevent a single submarine with 140 cruise missiles on it, having a base in the area, from fulfilling the purpose that they have in mind?

Mr Miller: That is a different topic and it could certainly be considered. They are currently conventional but that could certainly be considered. US Ohio class ballistic missile submarines occasionally visit Faslane to demonstrate that we are here.

Q105 Martin Docherty-Hughes: First, my apologies to you, Chair, and to Mr Miller for arriving late. Mr Miller, what role should European allies and the UK in particular play in resolving this dispute?

Mr Miller: The United States has been informing its allies and consulting allies for many years. This is in fact a bilateral treaty, but the United States has said that the Russians are in violation and the statement, the communiqué, by NATO Foreign Ministers on 4 December is entirely agreed by all NATO Foreign Ministers: Russia is in—the technical term is “material breach” of the INF treaty. It is the decision solely of the United States Government as to whether to withdraw from this treaty, having recognised that the treaty is irreparably broken, but we have been working with our NATO allies throughout the last four-plus years.

Q106 **Martin Docherty-Hughes:** This certainly isn’t 1989; there is a very different political geography in the Russian Federation. But some of our allies in the alliance also have a very different relationship with the Russian Federation now. Some would say they would discount the relationship that Greece has, given the long-term historical, religious and cultural context, but you also now have the Prime Minister of Hungary, Orbán, making visits to the Russian Federation. How effective is a statement from NATO allies when there are those relationships at such a high level?

Mr Miller: I would make two points in response to your cogent observations. The first is that that underscores the difficulty that NATO would have in trying to get 29 nations to agree to put a new nuclear system in Europe, but given what you have said, it is also a statement of how powerful the argument is that the United States has made with its allies that all 29 Foreign Ministers, including Foreign Ministers from the countries that you mentioned, agree that Russia is now in violation of the treaty.

Q107 **Martin Docherty-Hughes:** On that question, breaking the treaty, you talked about the Russian Federation bringing forward new missiles because they are moving other missiles to other arenas.

Mr Miller: That was my speculation.

Q108 **Martin Docherty-Hughes:** If you were to continue to speculate, where would they be moving them to, given that recent manoeuvres they made—some of the largest manoeuvres since the Cold War—were in conjunction with the People’s Republic of China?

Mr Miller: My guess is not that they are moving the missiles, but that they are just reassigning targets.

Q109 **Martin Docherty-Hughes:** Would those be western targets or targets somewhere else?

Mr Miller: Both—western and China.

Q110 **Martin Docherty-Hughes:** And China?

Mr Miller: That’s my guess.

Q111 **Martin Docherty-Hughes:** It kind of makes sense; I’m just trying to set things out. Finally, what, if any, are the implications for UK defence policy of the failure of the treaty?



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Mr Miller: I think it is incumbent on all NATO Governments to make a much stronger public case that Russia has broken this treaty. Sadly, one leaves too many meetings with people saying, "Ah, well, the US is abrogating the INF treaty." The US has recognised that Russia has destroyed the INF treaty. I wrote an op-ed a few weeks ago where I quoted from a letter that President Kennedy sent to Bertrand Russell. During the Cuban missile crisis, Bertrand Russell sent Kennedy a note saying, "You have created this huge problem", to which Kennedy replied in writing, "I would have thought that your attention was better turned to the burglars rather than to those who caught the burglars."

In this instance, I think NATO and each individual ally Government need to make a much stronger case—do something not only in Brussels in a statement, but within their own borders. They need to say, "Look, the Russians are dangerously breaking—have broken—a treaty. Why do they need more nuclear warheads? Why do they need more nuclear systems? NATO has not gone in that direction. This is not a response to anything NATO has done. Why do the Russians do this? Why have they destroyed this treaty?"

Q112 Martin Docherty-Hughes: To finish that off, some at the moment would say that, at least up until the mid-terms, the United States, given the President's approach, was becoming slightly more isolationist. That would be no surprise. Given the week this Parliament has been through, some would say that Brexit is driving the UK to mirror that isolationism. Because of that, do you think that maybe other EU states will need to recalibrate their position? If there are any challenges, what would they be, in terms of trying to recalibrate the more isolationist approach from some other NATO members?

Mr Miller: If I might, I will answer that a little bit more fully in private session.

Martin Docherty-Hughes: I am looking forward to it.

Mr Miller: What I would say to you is that NATO is the most successful military alliance in the history of the world. Most of the EU states are NATO members. We all need to continue to believe in NATO and to strengthen NATO. The United States has made clear through its actions and through statements by Secretaries of State and Secretaries of Defence that it fully supports the alliance.

Q113 John Spellar: You mentioned the US abrogation of the treaty. Can we be clear that the US has indicated an intention to give notice of termination of the treaty, rather than actually giving that notice?

Mr Miller: Yes. The United States has indicated that if Russia has not returned to compliance within 60 days, the United States will exercise its right under the national self-interest clause of the treaty to formally remove itself from the treaty.

I might make one other comment, because this is part of the litany in this story. You will read that when the United States removed itself from the



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ABM treaty in 2001, under George W. Bush, as far as Mr Putin is saying now, that ended the prospect for future arms control between the United States and Russia. The Russians keep making that statement. I would observe that within three or four months of that, the so-called treaty of Moscow was signed between the United States and the Russian Federation.

Then there was the New START treaty, signed with Russia in Moscow under President Obama. If you look at the deployment of strategic anti-ballistic missile systems today, the United States has about 40-odd in Alaska and California, which are trying to prevent attack from North Korea. There are more Russian ABM systems deployed today around Moscow than the United States deployed, as a result of its getting out of that treaty. Again, one has to pierce through Russian propaganda to say: one, there have been follow-on arms control agreements; and two, the Russians have more ABMs than the US.

Q114 John Spellar: To what extent, then, should NATO and NATO countries be playing a bigger role in actually getting the message that you have just very accurately described out? What should they do about it?

Mr Miller: The whole of Government, which is an interesting term, effort in the United States, the United Kingdom and every other NATO country, needs to be engaged in putting out a positive message. I think I may have said the last time I was in front of this Committee, the demographics suggested four years ago that between about 28% and 30% of the populations of NATO countries were born after the fall of the Berlin wall. In Turkey at that time four years ago it was 40-odd per cent. If, as people who have been through the Cold War, we don't explain to our populations why NATO continues to exist and what the threat is from the east—that Vladimir Putin is not a good neighbour—then shame on us. We know how to do this, but we are not doing it effectively. Shame on us.

Chair: On that—

Mr Miller: Uplifting note.

Chair: On that sobering note, we shall draw the opening session to an end. Thank you very much for your public testimony. The session is concluded.