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THE EXIT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FROM THE INTERMEDIATE-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES TREATY: EXPLANATION THROUGH REALISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM

Bachelor`s Thesis

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Abstract

In 2019 the United States confirmed its withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (hereafter INF) with the explanation that Russia violated the INF Treaty by developing intermediate-range missiles. According to the INF Treaty, both parties had to eliminate and ban the development of intermediate-range missiles while being a part of this treaty.

The objective of this thesis was to explore the United States' decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty even though the treaty had served the interests of the US for several decades, and afterwards find out which theory, realism, or constructivism, explained the reasoning of this withdrawal better. Analysing the statements of withdrawal through two different International Relations theory will help to understand the different aspects that are connected to the withdrawal. The main reason is to fully understand which theory explains the reasoning of the United States to withdraw from the INF Treaty better.

The findings were supported by statement, speeches, and reports by the United States' government officials who stated different reasons why the United States decided to withdraw from the INF Treaty. The analysis in the empirical section of this thesis showed that the United States' reasoning to withdraw from the INF Treaty was mainly driven by the realistic logic. The United States was mostly concerned with its security interests, balance of power, and post-treaty arms race. These all fall into the category of realism. In contrast, the arguments related to the constructivist logic were less frequent and central.

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Introduction

The history of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (afterwards INF) Treaty dates back to the Cold War era when Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet Union's leader and Ronald Reagan, the President of the United States (afterwards US) started working towards an agreement which later became the INF Treaty and was ratified on 1 June 1988 (U.S. Department of State 1987). Its objective was to eliminate and ban all intermediate-range missiles and therefore assure the strategic stability. According to the INF Treaty, the US was obligated to destroy 430 missiles and the Soviet Union 979 missiles (Arms control factsheet 2019).

The INF Treaty had survived the end of Cold War, continued to be a part of post-Cold War nuclear arms control regime until 2014 when the first doubts about Russia's violations to the INF Treaty were raised by the West which were confirmed by March 2017 (Arms control factsheet 2019). The United States President Donald Trump's administration created an integrated strategy to counter Russian violations in 2017. Despite that, the INF Treaty came to an abrupt end after both parties accused each other of violating namely article VI (a). Article IV (a) states that neither side is allowed to "produce, flight-test or launch any intermediate-range missiles or any launchers of such missiles;" (U.S. Department of State 1987). Little after that on August 2 President of USA announced resignation from INF (Arms control factsheet 2019).

Even though the reasons for stepping down were presented and justified, Trump claimed: "We're not going to let them violate a nuclear agreement and do weapons and we're not allowed to. We're the ones that have stayed in the agreement and we've honoured the agreement but Russia has not unfortunately honoured the agreement so we're going to terminate the agreement, we're going to pull out" (cited in Borger and Penngelly 2018) the consequences of this actions affected and still will affect many countries and the security of many countries. This creates the need to further study this withdrawal, namely observe the arguments given by the US and explain why the termination of the treaty was necessary and why the US decided not try or continue to make Russia comply to the INF Treaty. Several researchers bring forward the need to further try to explain reasoning for terminating the treaty through two different International Relations theories which will give more insightful description as to what led the US to the termination of this treaty. Analysing this decision through realism and constructivism will make this research different as they help to bring forward different parts of the problem at hand for example the issue of arms control and connect them to the two selected theories giving a clear picture of where given reasons fall. This helps to give more depth into whether the US was driven by reasons reflecting realism or rather constructivism in its decision-making.

The objective for this thesis is to find out which of the two chosen theories – realism or constructivism – explains the reasoning for withdrawing from the INF Treaty, the best. This is also supported by three proposed research questions which help to keep research focused. The first question being the main research question and supported by second and third: what explains the United States decision to terminate the INF Treaty focuses on specific reasons why USA decided to withdraw from this contract? Second, the first supportive question brings forward the realistic view the role of strategic calculations in the making and unmaking of arms control regimes. Third, the second supportive question: explores how ideas and considerations of appropriateness mattered in the decision in the unmaking of arms control regimes.

The first part of this thesis introduces theoretical basis which explains realism and constructivism in International Relations and in point of view of arms control. This allows to understand the connection between arms control and international alliances and how these two different theories view each aspect. Then comes the methodological part, which explains how the study applied the two theories to the case of the US withdrawal from the INF Treaty. Then comes the empirical part of the study which brings forth the decision and background of the US leaving the INF Treaty. The last two parts categorized found reasons according whether it connects more to realistic logic or constructivist logic which is heavily based upon research questions mentioned above.

The method used for this thesis consists of analysing different government documents and making conclusions depending on theoretical section which gives an overview of the theories which will try to best explain the reasons of the USA withdrawing from the INF Treaty. Documentation which will provide the basis to build an analysis on is the different statements made by the US and are being supported by the INF Treaty Articles when needed to.

1. Realism and constructivism in nuclear arms control

The first chapter will explore the general idea of realism and constructivism in international relations. Realism is one of the chosen theories because of its state-centred approach to international system and the classical realist point of view that also brings forward the importance of human nature (Berg et al. 2008, 60-61). Constructivism is the competing theory for this thesis. Whereas realism relies on materialism and explains how already existing factors influence the behaviour of countries then constructivism focuses on the ideas of how those mentioned aspect has come to be, nothing can merely exist because of the fun of it (Berg et al. 2008, 74). Secondly, it will examine how each theory explains arms control in international relations. The first subchapter tries to explain how realism sees and characterizes international relations. The second subchapter's aim is to explore how realism explains the decision of a state to enter or withdraw from an arms control agreement. The third and fourth subchapters focus on constructivism in international relations and similarly to the second subsection, the last subsections try to explain constructivist view of arms control and how constructivism explains a state's decision to enter or withdraw from an arms control agreement. This chapter will give the framework to then better explain the underlying reasoning why the US decided to leave the INF Treaty.

1.1. Realism in international relations

Realism in international theory has been divided into two parts – classical realism and neorealism. Realism states that the actions of countries make up international relations. The three keywords for realism are: balance of power, anarchy and competition which are all connected to each other. Eiki Berg et. al (2018, 60-64) have concluded that realism sees countries as rational actors and that is why, it is possible to predict how states are going to act. According to Kenneth N. Waltz's theory the main aim of countries is to ensure their security which brings forward the balance and search of power as the element of competition. In addition to that, viewing other countries as an element of threat, is increased. Furthermore, this makes countries interact with each other which causes different reactions and power shifts. In the background of all this, is anarchy. Countries form a self-help system in the anarchical background and are not obliged to comply to a larger set of rules of international relations by

a bigger entity or organization. Consequently again, this phenomena brings forward the need and insurance of some kind of power. Also, in a self-help system actors work towards not specifically their own good but towards protecting themselves against others (Waltz 1979, 105).

When analysing the situation with the INF Treaty then the treaty itself was an agreement between two sovereign countries that were similar despite their different leadership structure because of the treaty. This is how neorealists would see this relationship. Classical realists see countries as actors whose main concern is their own security and therefore pushes them to make decisions, conform agreements when it best suits their own security in the long run.

Firstly, when thinking about two super-countries like the US and Russia, balance of power is an aspect that the realist theory considers very important. Waltz brings forward reasoning that Thomas Hobbes sticks to, which is related to "competition – fighting to achieve something, diffidence – to keep the achievement, and glory – competing for prestige," (Waltz 2008, 78-79). Neorealists inversely see power as a tool and as a country's capability of a state and bring forefront security which seeks power and power as a component of a structure (Waltz 2008, 79). This factor also affects their behaviour (Waltz 2008, 79). In realists view the INF Treaty was a way for both countries to limit the other's power and role in the international system. Daniel Drezner (2021, 38) states, "the pursuit of greater capabilities causes other actors to react with strategies that trigger escalating costs to the accumulation of power." (Drezner 2021, 38). This is also connected to Waltz's thought about excessive power which in international politics has almost always eventually lead to failure and Drezner adds that it also leads to the creation of an opposition (Drezner 2021, 38).

Second factor is an international system which inherently is an anarchic one, this also contributes to how states behave and decide to act. Realism sees the international system as an anarchic system in which there are no higher powers than countries themselves (Berg et al. 2018, 61). This creates a self-help system where each state has taken it upon themselves to first and foremost protect its security (Weber 1990, 61-62). There are two very different ways of explaining anarchy in international relations. Steven Forde (1995, 145-146) describes thoroughly in his article that in the big picture international relations consist of an anarchic structure, as stated above but classical realists explain structured anarchy through human nature. Since anarchy is what humans live by then that also explains their behaviour to develop their own security and contest other actors in that same structure. Neorealism explains anarchy through structure itself and sees it as a foundation of realism. They believe that states are mainly

pursuing their own interests and that creates an international system that could be describes as multipolar, bipolar or something else depending on the change of structure.

Whereas the states are most important actors, therefore one could ponder, that countries with different structures also affect the human nature which is the centre for classical realists. Both realists and neorealists agree that the structure of state is deeply connected to the differentiation of outcomes (Waltz 2008, 80). Although for neorealists, structure is the defining aspect that interferes with countries' outcomes (Waltz 2008, 80).

Therefore, realism considers states to be so called rational actors whose main aim is to pursue their objectives which mainly consists of security. They take action that their security is ensured which can consist of pursuing power and limiting a rival's power through arms control.

1.2. Realism in arms control

Turning from general description of realism to the more specific issue of how realism explains states entering into – or withdrawing from – arms control agreements, it is important to also understand how each theory sees the larger subject of the thesis, arms control.

As explained more in the last subchapter, realists view the international structure as anarchic. The anarchic structure also explains the reasons why it forces states to make power-based decisions, acting in accordance with their interests, and rather regard other states as a threat and act in this regard to ensure its security or decide, depending on the power level of that threatening country, to cooperate with the objective to limit its power and therefore threat in the name of strategic stability.

Realists are rather pessimistic about the prospects of arms control. The international system lessens the possibilities of cooperation of states because of the "division of possible gains" which could benefit a rival more (Waltz 1979, 106). Charles L. Glaser (1994, 54-58) concludes the structural realist theory which states that international system is built upon states' self-help which encourages competitive policies and therefore, the possibility for cooperation, such as in arms control, is almost impossible because of the risks of being cheated. The main thing that works against cooperation according to realists, is uncertainty about the competitive states and sensitivity to the influence it has on their own capabilities. For realists, cooperation gives a way for a competitor to cheat on agreements. Having said that, Glaser argues that the prospects for

arms control, even as seen from a realist perspective, are in fact not that grim. He then goes on to bring forward a contingent realist approach which helps him criticize neorealists main argument. He criticises that neorealism does not explain why states should choose competition over cooperation and focuses too deeply on the risks of cooperation by forgetting to assess the risks of competition (Glaser 1994, 59-60). He argues that the form of arms control could guarantee better security than the competitive possibilities when both sides think that an arms race would cause more security risks than arms control (Glaser 1994, 59). Another criticism brought out about realism, fails to consider the fact that all decisions about arms race or control are being done considering the situation and historic factors that may have an effect on the future (Jervis 1988, 320).

The realist view of balance of power theory is an interesting aspect as to it could point to the arms race more than arms control where power-states are trying to become as or more powerful than their rival. In addition to that, balance of power theory could also point that alliances are formed rather between a powerful state and a weaker state creating a "bandwagoning effect" (Waltz 1979, 125-126). In addition to that, states' behaviour could change within new factors, for example nuclear weapons.

Rajesh M. Basrur (2005, 130-131) brings out that the realist view also sees more soft way of power play where limited war or even cooperation becomes a way to preserve peace. Different mistakes that could potentially cause a false nuclear launch force states in a hostile relationship, into arms control and put more pressure into avoiding the next war.

Another factor that could also speak for cooperation, and therefore for states entering into arms control agreements despite their concerns over the other side cheating, is a so-called "joint custodianship" in realist theory which Steve Weber (1990, 63-65) explains with the US and Russia for the basis. This need would emerge mainly because without it, both states have the risk of not rising as a major power in international system. Although he declines joint custodianship in Russia's and the US' terms because it requires a positive management. This kind of action is not possible for those two states because both are too focused on their own gain as a result of joint custodianship. When competition between two countries in a bipolar world was to continue then both would manage their own "sphere of influence".

To conclude these reflections on how realism considers the prospects of arms control, why, from a realist point of view states enter into, or withdraw from, an arms control agreement: realism usually sees arms control more as a weakness and a risk than something that could increase the security of a state. Due to the competitive and anarchic international field competitiveness can be associated also with human nature and therefore cooperation with rivals and states with the same military capabilities can create insecurity which then could turn into a conflict. A possible factor that could either reduce or increase the need for cooperation, could be the unipolar, multipolar or bipolar world order. In addition, after the rise of nuclear weapons, it has been found that this could change states' behaviour and make them more prone to cooperation or alternative ways of resolving conflict because of the force level nuclear weapons hold.

Realism has a quite straightforward view on why states enter into arms control agreements. It expects states to enter into arms control agreements if it fits into their own interest and interest in the international system (Berg et. Al, 60 & Weber 1990). In other words, when it shares their security objectives. Related to this is the states' role in international arena. States' interests differentiate depending on their level of power and influence. That is also something that can affect states' views on arms control agreements. Second aspect, withdrawing from arms control agreements. Realism already views arms control agreements as an aspect for insecurity because of possible violations (Glaser 1994, 56). Therefore, according to realism, the exit from arms control agreements should also serve states' interests. Realism sees this as the most logical option because of the competition-like context and using power as a tool to ensure its security (Waltz 2008, 78-79).

1.3 Constructivism in international relations

There are various differences between how realists and constructivists see the international system and anarchy, balance of power and state's interests. For realists, some factors are simply given, like state's interest. Although constructivism sees the need to dig a little deeper and find the origin of that. Eiki Berg et. al (2018, 73-75) conclude that constructivists see the world as socially constructed, it relies on ideas which help to explain different existing facts in the world, for example what country leaders have stated and stress that although realists see anarchy as something that just exists. Constructivism also inspects states' interest which is power. For constructivists, power and mostly interests change according to relations and therefore they conclude that on some cases, power and security are more important than in others.

The change of interests is connected to identity which change when one of them changes. Constructivists also try to explain actor and structure and how they react to one another. Structure and agents are mutually constitutive. Therefore structure (international system containing material and ideas) and agency (the ability to act) influence each other (Theys, 2018).

Structure is what creates the context for states to follow or change using their identity. Furthermore, Eiki Berg et. al (2018, 74) bring more focus to the aspect of constructivist theory where the structures consist of norms and rules which help identities to make the "right choices." In addition, this shows the connection between an agent and the structure. Both can change each other even though agents act accordingly to structure. Although, because of the stability of state's identity, the structure does not tend to change that often.

Constructivism considers anarchy as something that states create by themselves and the change in anarchy and state's identity comes forward depending on who states communicate with, for example with their allies, rivals, and weaker states (Wendt 1992, 396-397). Where realism saw that international system makes cooperation more difficult than constructivists do not set a certain view on it. Cynthia Weber (2001, 60, 66) explained the phenomena further that when states decide to be hostile towards each other than the nature of the anarchy seems to be also conflicting. Although, when states decide to cooperate, the anarchy seems to be cooperative. In a sense, it explains also why constructivism sees that actor's behaviour is "unpredictable prior to social interaction." This also connects to the argument made above which stated that the change within actor and structure depend on each other.

Sarina Theys (2018) also concludes the next Wendt's example to describe constructivism: British nuclear weapons are less harmful for the United States than North Korean nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons do not serve as keyword, the social factor does. Nuclear weapons themselves do not have any consequence of someone's action but when bringing social context into play then nuclear weapons also take up a new meaning. Similarly, to realists, constructivists are cut in two when talking about actors. Conventional constructivists focus on explaining different types of causes that make an actor act a certain way. They are interested in different relationships between an actor, social norms and much more and believe that actors make decisions according to their identity and when that identity is prone to change, find out what exactly cause the change. Critical constructivists delve more into actors' identity and how that came to be and what it consists of. Usually, they believe that an identity is created through actors' relationships which changes over time. Lastly, the logic of action is something that relates to the expectations when states enter into or withdraw from an arms control agreement. States tend to follow certain norms and ideas of what is "the right thing to do." According to James G. March and Johan P. Olsen (2013) Another factor that comes into light within constructivism is the logic of appropriateness which explains a set of rules to justify a certain action although they do not regulate political behaviour and outcome exactly. They also state that rules exist because they provide better outcomes then the alternatives. Although, they predict the outlines of that behaviour, but the actor still has freedom to change its behaviour without even changing the rules or the structure within the rules. The main argument is that humans have certain roles and identities which need a set of rules and appropriate behaviour. Rules tell actors which behaviours are appropriate, although these rules do not always have the authority to guide and impose certain behaviours.

This is very important when explaining arms control. In addition to the ways that were stated above, according to the logic of appropriateness, states are expected to enter into an arms control agreement if it is considered an appropriate action. On the other side, states are expected to withdraw from an arms control agreement if it is no longer appropriate.

1.4 Constructivism in arms control

Comparing to realism, constructivism tries to explain different phenomena in international relations through social sphere and social rules. Differently to realism, constructivism considers the same aspects as realism but from entirely different point of view. When exploring how constructivism explains arms control and security, it seems that state's behaviour is something that is not easily predicted but depends largely on the dynamics between the two countries and the context behind them. More importantly, on the identity relationship between the two and on the wider normative structure of rules and norms which make arms control either an appropriate action or not. The cooperation with rivals may be more complicated and insecure then cooperation between allies. Here, power is also something that could come into play and bend the social dynamics.

In international relations social constructivism explains that the chosen identities by actors affect their interest, constructed rules which make up, how states then act (Eiki Berg et. al 2018, 73-75). According to that, Jo – Ansie van Wyk and Linda Kinghorn (2007) who find that when states enter into arms control agreements, some part of their identity, behaviour, relations, and

expectations are changed. In addition to that, most states tend to keep their agreements because after the slight change in the mentioned aspects, the agreement serves their best interests. They bring forth a complication that may arise when states again decide to reidentify their interests and therefore arms control and security interests. They also describe the change in identity in regard to policy statements, propaganda, threats and so on with the example of the US' war against terrorism. "A constructed collective identity gives social facts meaning and gives such facts a normative force" (Wyk & Kinghorn 2007).

Before in history, the US has proved what role the social context and the power dynamics change the behaviour of states. Vandana Bhatia's (2012) article described more in detail about the nuclear cooperation between the US and India. Even though then US President decided on sanctions against India after it did not comply with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (hereafter NPT), the next President offered cooperation to India from which was born the Henry Hide United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act (hereafter the Henry Hide Act). As both, the US and India saw the nuclear debate differently. The author argues that this is best explained by the constructivist approach. The difference in debates comes mainly from the different approaches both countries have to proliferation and disarmament. The problems that were raised, were exactly because of each states' different approach to proliferation and disarmament. Lastly, Bhatia considers the possibility of India again emerging as a supplier of nuclear technology as constructivists the change of states inevitable. Another authors bring out that India's constructions of norms, about the nuclear weapons, were mainly influenced by the geo-political factors and are connected to the powerplay with Pakistan which therefore may have changed India's norms (Wyk & Kinghorn 2007). In addition, after the Cold War NPT has become a normative structure which influences states' behaviour (Wyk & Kinghorn 2007).

According to this, one could consider the NPT be the most important set of rules and norm for nuclear states to follow in the area of nuclear arms control. United Nations (2022) describes Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a treaty which counters the spread of nuclear weapons and its technology, promotes cooperation through the peaceful use of nuclear energy and develops the disarmament. The NPT had to undergo a review every five years where the future steps and the developments of the NPT are agreed upon. Some of the norms that NPT put forward where some of them are following: all parties of the NPT should make effort to avoid the dangers of nuclear war, believe in the negative effects of proliferation, agree on the circulation of nuclear weapons, and take effective measures towards nuclear

disarmament, achieve the trust between countries in order to liquidate all existing nuclear arsenal. These are just few which describe the general norms set by the NPT.

A more theoretical approach to how constructivists describe arms control and security is brought on in Latha Varadarajan's (2004) article, in which she states that constructivists prefer to focus on cultural-institutional context where actors interact and are constructed rather than focus on the material or a power focused approach. This comes with the environment and identity which help to explain the security policies. Even though the nation state cannot be an individual, there is a creation of collective identity in the nation and state which also plays an important role during the cultural-institutional context with the question of national interest.

Constructivists have defined two different houses of cooperation that Jeffrey S. Lantis (2016) explains further, where in first generation a usual life cycle consisted of creating new principles for global politics. He goes on to explain that when powerful agents are going to change the norms then they may be easily influenced, although Second generations see traditional norms as very fragile and therefore develops analysis of different relationships between the agent and structure. He then went on to conclude that cooperation provides legitimacy and reinforcement for positive practices.

Taking all the above into account, constructivism expects states to enter into an arms control agreement if firstly it serves the logic of appropriateness, in this case it would be the NPT, secondly serves state's interest in the sense of context. The cooperation with the other party is not conflictual. Conversely, constructivism sees states withdraw from an arms control agreement when the relations between two parties have turned hostile and therefore their interest have changed, and also changing then the structure surrounding them.

2. Decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty

The second chapter of this paper looks into different statements made by the US regarding the withdrawal from the INF Treaty and will identify concrete reasons from statements in the selected sources to state why the US made its decision to step out from the INF Treaty, and whether the US decision was mostly guided by realist calculations, or by constructivist reasoning. Firstly, it will introduce the method used which will be the base for the following empirical part.

The last two subchapters will present the results of the analysis of the statements of the US officials with the regard to the decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty which are categorized as either realist or constructivist explanations. This, in addition presents the findings of my empirical analysis.

The reasons given for withdrawing are puzzling because of the gravity of the INF Treaty and the possible change of identities the end of this treaty will bring forward in various states as this treaty is restricting two major powers' weaponry arsenal and therefore may have an effect on other smaller states. The INF Treaty had banned the production and flight-testing of all intermediate-range missiles and the launchers of said missiles (INF Treaty). In addition to that, both parties were obligated to eliminate any existing intermediate-range missiles in their possession (INF Treaty). These reasons are being categorized taking into account the realistic and constructivist logic in the second and third subchapter. To be more specific, certain aspects of those theories that were explored in the theoretical part of this thesis, will be taken into focus while analysing stated reasons for stepping out from the INF Treaty. The analysis will allow to decide which theory better explains the US decision to withdraw from the treaty and therefore to understand the strategic manoeuvres made by the US.

2.1 Method

The method used for this thesis is a basic form of qualitative content analysis. This is the most suitable approach to this thesis because I will be analysing statements by the US officials concerning the withdrawal from the INF Treaty, and therefore analysing them through realism and constructivism. This kind of analysis will let me later make conclusions and identify which

theory explained the US decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty better and which mode of reasoning was predominant, and therefore I am able to make conclusion about the overall question of this thesis.

Using the method described above, I will bring out reasons for stepping out of the INF Treaty and state which sources mentioned. This will create a basis for discussion and a base for conclusions in the following subchapters. Thereafter, analysing stated reasons, I will be able to explore each stated reason and find connections to either realism or constructivism. For this, relying on the theoretical section is essential.

The empirical part is built up on the analysis of stated reasons of the US and theories explored in the theoretical part to eventually find the reasoning behind the US' strategy of withdrawing from the INF Treaty. In more detail, it is further analysed with the main aspects of realism and constructivism.

Main focus is on the statements concerning the US reasoning to withdraw from the INF Treaty which can be found in the different sources. To be more precise, the explanations that are being stated the most in chosen sources will be categorized as expressing either the realist logic or the constructivist logic, as these are seen as the most relative reasons for stepping out from the INF Treaty. The realist logic can be found in statements that emphasize national security concerns, the need not to be constrained by the INF Treaty while Russia violates the same agreement and develops treaty-violating missiles, and wider strategic calculations concerning such as China's increasing role in the international system. On the other hand, constructivist logic can be seen in statements that stress the importance of acting appropriately, the responsibility to work towards nuclear disarmament, limiting nuclear proliferation, or the role of the US as a leader in the field of nuclear non-proliferation.

When it comes to the timeframe of the analysis it is important to state that the debate about stepping out of the INF Treaty began earlier than a few years before the actual process which makes choosing the spectre more difficult. Therefore, I took into account the time when Donald Trump became the President of the United States because during his term, the US withdrew from the INF Treaty. Therefore, it would be needed that statements from two years before the withdrawal are also included. In other words, the time period for which the sources are chosen from are from 2017-2019. Two years is the chosen time period as therefore the government sources analysed will be only from President Trump's administration, Congressional Records, and Senate who also spoke up on the matter more than the last two presidents. Although the

Senate does not have a veto right, they can vote on a resolution of ratification and the president then has the right to either withdraw the resolution or still go forward with it (United States Senate, 2022). This pre-withdrawal debate will help to make sure whether the reasons to step out did change during the few years to the withdrawal. It will also hell to discover different reasons as it cannot be expected that there was only one reason why the US decided to step out from the INF Treaty

Another factor which needed to be considered is the selection of sources. As there are many articles and different reporting about the end of the INF Treaty in the media, it is necessary to make a restricted selection of sources that are useful and will give the most correct and objective coverage why the US has made the decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty. The government sources included archives of President Trump (statements and speeches), statements from the Secretary of Defence – here were all Secretaries of Defence statements looked into as Trump's administration had more than one, statements and speeches made by other members of Trump's administration, and the Senate. In addition to that, official press releases made by the government pages will also be looked into as these communicate the debate regarding the withdrawal from the INF Treaty. In addition to that, official reports for Congress.

I decided to choose sources only from the US' official governmental Internet pages and online archives. This way, the correctness of the information is ensured. In addition to that, official press news from the same pages were also chosen as suitable sources because the press releases are formatted from the official statements, speeches, documents which is one form of sources chosen. Aldo, press in the governmental organisations do not compete with other media sources. This means that these do not compete over clicks and therefore cover only what their organisation needs. For example, there is a press page for Secretary of Defence site (U.S. Department of Defense, 2022).

When analysing statements through the two chosen theories – realism and constructivism. For this, arguments which reflect the logic of action described by either theory can be connected to arms control and entering or withdrawing from an arms control agreements and which were also covered in the theoretical part of this thesis. For both theories, the main thought will be taken as a base which will help to keep the focus of the analysis which is regarding the mentioned theme above. Realism sees that states enter into arms control agreements when it directly increases their security. On the opposite spectre, a state withdraws from an arms control agreement when there is an increasing balance of power conflict, and the outer threat

is now decreasing its security more than being in an arms control agreement with a state that was once a threat to its security. In other words, state's actions and objectives can be explained through the will to protect itself in anarchy and sustain the power but mainly security it already has. Constructivism, on the other hand, thinks that states are more likely to enter into an arms control agreement when the set norms and rules see it as an appropriate behaviour. Conversely, they tend to exit arms control agreements when they see that the set of rules and norms are not followed and is needed to take action because of the state's role. For example, staying in the treaty is no longer suitable as a responsible nuclear power or staying in the treaty is no longer compatible with the responsibility the US feels towards its commitments to ensure effective nuclear arms control. For each theory a set of their characteristics is taken into account which will help to analyse given reasons and therefore understand the US' reasoning behind withdrawing from the INF Treaty.

2.2 The realist explanation: considerations of strategic stability in the United States' decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty

Firstly, and most frequently the US brought out Russian violations and their non-compliance through the years as a trigger to complete the withdrawal from the INF Treaty (Trump White House Archives 2019, the U.S. Department of State 2019 & U.S. Department of State 2017). "For, far too long, Russia has violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with impunity, covertly developing and fielding a prohibited missile system that poses a direct threat to our allies and troops abroad." (Trump White House Archives 2019). The second evidence also points to the US' interests: "It is nor in the United States' national security interest to abide by a treaty when we are the only ones abiding by it." (Congressional Records 2017). The realist logic here sees that Russia is a direct threat to the US and its allies because it is developing missiles that violate the INF Treaty. Therefore, the logical action to take, is to withdraw from the INF Treaty to continue developing the US' security.

The INF Treaty in itself was dated and did not deserve the resources that the US put out to save it. It was dated because during the years the INF Treaty was an active agreement, the US developed sea- and air-based missiles but did not develop land-based missiles. More importantly, China has built the largest ground-launched missiles which consists of more than 2000 ballistic and cruise missiles and also developed missiles against the US aircraft carriers (Stokes 2019, 3-5). "In addition, China and Iran, which are nor parties of the Treaty, each possess more than 1,000 INF Treaty-range missiles." (Trump White House Archives 2019). Therefore, according to the realist explanation, the agreement does not only pose a threat to the US' security but is also dated and to continue should be made multilateral and should be reviewed about the missiles that it consists of.

The second line of argument consists of the realist vision of the balance of power theory. Both states entered the INF Treaty to limit the opposing power. For the years when both states were complying with the INF Treaty the power was at balance. With the Russian non-compliance, also started the shifts in balance of power. Both states reduced their nuclear arsenals and eliminated a full category of nuclear weapons (Arms Control Association 2019). At the time, from a realist point of view, this behaviour served both their interest because the US and Russia were also the main superpowers in an international arena after the Cold War. Reducing their arsenal did not overwhelmingly affect either states' position as a superpower. When Russia started to violate the INF Treaty, the balance of power started also shifting and Russia joined an arms race with China whereas the US was bound by the INF Treaty and therefore continuing the INF Treaty put the US' security in danger. "We must be prepared to counter and outmatch Russia's missile build-up. The Treaty as it stands only limits America's ability to compete." (Congressional Records 2018). "It is more destabilizing when only one-party complies because there is no longer a transparent balance of forces." (Congressional Records 2018). According to these findings the problem that realist theory brings out, with the balance of power is evident. With the Russian violations, limiting Russian power is not actual and the only power that is being limited is that of the US' which is not an interest of them.

Russian violations created even more of an insecure relationship between the US and Russia. In a realist view, as the US' interest in securing and limiting Russia's power. "It also jeopardizes the trust you need for any other treaty." (U.S. Department of Defense 2018). Therefore, the most logical step according to the realist theory, was to withdraw from the INF Treaty because the INF Treaty had become a liability. "We must be prepared to counter and outmatch Russia's missile build-up. The Treaty as it stands only limits America's ability to compete." (Congressional Records 2018). With withdrawing from the INF Treaty, the US makes a realist move and consequently is able to start increasing its security and limit Russian power through an arms race.

The US brought out that the rise of China's role in the international arena and their missile arsenal is a factor which had an effect on the ending of the INF Treaty (Congressional Record

2018 & Trump White House Archives 2019). "Indeed, China has a free rein on intermediate range nuclear missile development, while the U.S. is limited by the INF Treaty." (Congressional Records 2018). Although, this is a different reasoning to end the INF Treaty, the realist explanation for this is about the changing of balance of power and how this negatively affects US security. With China and its rising role, the security of the US is more under threat now then it was during the ratification of the INF Treaty. China's ground-launched missile arsenal is a big security threat and now that the US decided to withdraw from the INF Treaty, it will have more flexibility to secure its position in Asia by either deploying missiles to states which are the allies of the US and therefore also sparing the naval forces (Congressional Research Service 2019, 38). Therefore, increasing its main interest according to realist view, security.

The next line of argument that reflects the realist logic, a concern with the US interest, is related to the security of US allies – and how the decision to stay in the INF Treaty affects the security of US allies. In a situation where the US is complying to the INF Treaty and Russia is not, will make the partnerships less influential and the weaker states will not see the US as a powerful enough of a partner which further undermines the US' role in the international system. "We will move forward with NATO and our other allies and partners to deny Russia any military advantage from its unlawful conduct." (Trump White House Archives 2019). "Russia's noncompliance under the treaty jeopardizes U.S. supreme interests as Russia's development and fielding of a treaty-violating missile system represents a direct threat to the United States and our allies and partners" (Pompeo 2019). The security of the US' allies become evident with the violations and one of US' interest are its allies therefore also their security.

Taking into consideration the discussion above, the arguments made by the US for the need to withdraw from the INF Treaty reflect the realist logic. The main reasoning was state's own security issue and the role in maintaining as one superpower in a multipolar world with China's increasing role in defensive aspects. This is also something that realists see as one of the important factor and objective for a state.

2.3 The constructivist explanation: considerations of appropriateness in the United States' decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty

The logic of appropriateness comes into play for the US in its decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty. For example, in this case what is expected from the US, a country that is under the NPT. Therefore, the role of the US should be taken into consideration. In other words, the US being a nuclear country will demand a certain following of norms. The NPT encourages that nuclear technology would be used peacefully, to ease the international tension and building trust between states and through that to put an end to manufacturing nuclear weapons and eliminating existing arsenals, prevent the advance of nuclear weapons, and many other norms to strive towards (United Nations 2022). In addition to that, the US has a role to fulfil, as a superpower that in a way leads the Western countries and is a major decision-maker. This logic is brought out in statement by the Secretary of State: "The United States remains committed to effective arms control that advances U.S., allied, and partner security; is verifiable and enforceable; and includes partners that comply responsibly with their obligations." (Pompeo 2019).

There has been criticism about the US' decision to leave the INF Treaty. The senator speaking, brings out in the Congressional Record (2019) that there has never been a question whether Russia is in violation of the INF Treaty or not, the question lies in the response of the US. He then criticizes Trump's administration in lacking strategy when dealing with this issue and bring out the aspect of Trump not appreciating arms control agreements enough because through that, European allies will be vulnerable to its aggression. "The path the administration has chosen leaves our allies vulnerable to Russian aggression, and at this moment, there is no recourse for the United States or our allies." (Congressional Records 2019). According to the constructivist theory, this puts into question what is the appropriate behaviour for the US according to its European allies and as a nuclear power which then brings forward the argument about respect for agreements. To counter this, the argument above shows evidence that even though the US withdrew from the INF Treaty, the US still prioritizes its allies and arms control. "The United States remains committed to effective arms control that advances U.S., allied, and partner security; is verifiable and enforceable; and includes partners that comply responsibly with their obligations." (Pompeo 2019).

Another important factor that affects arms control agreements is the context. Context in the sense of the relationship between states that are in an arms control agreement. Cooperation between two states that have different identities and values, is more complicated than cooperation between more similar countries. In this case, identity is on the forefront of the argument. "In response to the Russian violation in 2014 of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the United States downgraded the bilateral political and military relationship and suspended the Bilateral Presidential Commission, a body jointly founded in 2009 by the United States and Russia to promote cooperation between the two countries." (U.S. Department of State 2021). This statement is evidence to show that the context between two countries had turned more hostile than it was before which made the US take action. When now moving to the INF Treaty then Russia's change in its identity which was mentioned in a form of how Russia already had been violating the INF Treaty: Firstly, Russia made changes in its identity and its objectives, on paper Russia stayed the same. In other words, on paper Russia did not violate the INF Treaty but, Russia did and had changed its objectives.

When Russia started violating the INF Treaty, Russia altered its identity which therefore made the US do the same and change its interest. This is showed in the following statement: "In 2014, the United States declared the Russian Federation in violation of its obligations under the INF Treaty." (Nauert 2017). Where beforehand, it's objective was to strive towards a smaller arsenal and striving towards a peaceful politics, now both strive towards arms race. A clashing factor here is that the US was already starting to develop an alternative missile that would not be in the violation of the INF Treaty (U.S. Department of State 2019, 11-17 & Nauert 2017). Seeing as the development did not affect Russia into complying with the agreement, the US chose to again alter their interest and chose to withdraw from the INF Treaty and start developing missiles they could not when in the INF Treaty (Trump White House Archives 2019). Another evidence to this logic is the following: "Despite repeated U.S. efforts to engage the Russian Federation on this issue, Russian officials have so far refused to discuss the violation in any meaningful way or refute the information provided by the United States." (Nauert 2017). Another statement that showed Russian refusal to accept the US' role: "In spite of these efforts, Russian officials have refused to discuss the information provided by the United States or even answer basic questions." (U.S. Department of State 2017).

In constructivists views, with withdrawing from the INF Treaty, the US went against the norms that NPT had set and for which the INF Treaty was something that gave forward set norms. Constructivist would have seen a possibility of changing the INF Treaty to fit both states' new

identity and interests. This would have also made the INF Treaty more relevant in the US' and Russia's eyes. Another factor that constructivist would take into consideration in this case, is context and the dynamics between the two countries. Following the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991, U.S. Department of State (2021) wrote that the US and Russia started a cooperation on global issues where the US helped with Russia's integration to Europe. Although in 2014, after the aggression in Georgia and Ukraine Russia started the undermining international norms which made the established cooperation weak and coerced the US to work in securing its own security taking also into consideration its allies. Therefore, the relations between the US and Russia started to weaken and developed more aggressive tone than cooperative one before 2014. Therefore, the alliance in that sense, was in danger.

In a situation where Russia was not complying to the INF Treaty and the US was, latter was in a way losing its prestige in being unable to discipline the other party. "In this dangerous new era of great power rivalry, we cannot rely on Russian goodwill, but rather American strength." (Congressional Records 2018). This was an indicator in the international arena that the US' role is not more powerful. In order to re-establish its powerful role, the US needs to be able to rebuild it. Right now, it's in the form of developing intermediate-range and short-range ground-launched missiles. In addition, this statement is implying that the US should rely on its own role in the international system which with being a part of the INF Treaty would have been much smaller then when withdrawing from the INF Treaty.

Conclusion

This thesis explored the reasoning behind the US' decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty with the help realism and constructivism. The main objective was to figure out which theory explained the US' reasoning to withdraw from the INF Treaty better so that one could understand what the US may have taken into consideration when making the choice to withdraw from the INF Treaty. Even though there are various academic papers about the consequences of the end of the INF Treaty and what the next steps should be for NATO, the US, and Russia, this thesis focuses solely on using realism and constructivism to understand which theory helps to explain the US' reasoning for withdrawing the INF Treaty better.

Firstly, I defined the theoretical expectations of realism and constructivism which explained when either theory expects a country to withdraw from an arms control agreement. Secondly, the methodological framework was defined through which the study empirically tested the explanatory power of the two explanations in explaining the US decision to withdraw from the INF.

The main research question needed to find explanation as to why the US decided to withdraw from the INF Treaty. The first sub-question brought in the factors about realism and its logic of consequence and strategy. The second sub-question's objective was to seek an answer on how constructivists logic of appropriateness can explain the US' reasonings of withdrawing from the INF Treaty.

Turning to the findings, the US' reasons for withdrawing from the INF Treaty were straightforward and its reasoning to do so as well. When analysing the chosen sources, the main research question was completely answered. From the analysis of the sources, it was visible that the decision was driven mostly by security concerns and therefore by realist logic. There were two main reasons why the US decided to withdraw from the INF Treaty which both reflected the realist logic through security interest and the balance of power. After defining the stated reasons which were taken from official statements, press releases, official reports, and Congressional Records, the realist logic came more into view. The US decision makers emphasized their security interests and the security of their allies, the balance of power and therefore also arms race. All keywords mentioned point to the realist logic rather than constructivist logic.

Therefore, I find that realism is the theory that describes the US' reasoning for withdrawing from the INF Treaty better than constructivism. There were less central arguments that reflected the logic of appropriateness in the statements, speeches and reports of US officials where they give the reasonings for withdrawing from the INF Treaty. During the period when the US tried to find a solution to the Russian violations, the US conducted a constructivist point of view. Although when making the decision of withdrawing from the INF Treaty, the US relied on realism.

Research problem found the solution through the content analysis where first realism and secondly constructivism were in focus. Another possibility is to bring in the comparison of how different Presidents saw the arms control agreements. In the future these finding could show way to predict how the US could act or what way of thinking could lead to the decision the US will make.

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