

IGA-232/GOV-1735 Controlling the World's Most Dangerous Weapons  
Simulation: Nuclear Arms Control Negotiations  
October 7-11, 2019

## Approach

Each student will be assigned a role and should seek to pursue effectively the interests of the country and office that he or she represents. This does not mean that students must imitate the current positions of the officials now in those roles; rather, they should plausibly advance the interests of the assigned country and institution.

Facts other than those described in this scenario, such as how many nuclear missiles and warheads each country has, what the terms of past agreements have been, what positions countries have taken on key issues in the past, are the same as in the real world. Any further assumptions you make about your country's situation should be plausible (if political) and consistent with the laws of physics (if technical).

As the parties to the negotiations have agreed to meet, you should assume that they do so without preconditions, and if they can achieve an agreement meeting their objectives, they will support it.

It is up to the countries to decide what they should demand, what they should offer or threaten, and what compromises would be acceptable or unacceptable. Each country should think through what negotiating leverage it might have, how much it might be able to get, what its "best alternative to a negotiated agreement" (BATNA) is, and therefore what the minimum is that would still be better for its interests than not having an agreement. Grading for the exercise will be on thought and effort put into it, not on whether or not a deal is completed.

## Protocol

All negotiations should be conducted diplomatically, with respect for others. Each delegation should have a primary cell phone contact, to be shared with other delegations. All delegations must monitor their email during the simulation to ensure timely communication. **Please post your delegation's primary phone contact and all email addresses on the class webpage by noon on October 4, 2019, in reply to Simulation Contacts.** The class webpage will be a forum for press releases by participants and stories by those representing the media.

Formal negotiations will begin in class on October 8, 2019, and continue in class on October 10 if the delegations so decide. Additional negotiations including all or some of the parties may occur at other times and places as agreed by the negotiators of the relevant states. **All negotiations must be completed by 5:00 p.m. Friday, October 11, 2019. If an agreement has been completed by two or more teams, it should be posted to the class webpage.** Each team should post a statement to the world on the class web page as to why their country is joining in an agreement, is not joining, or why no agreement was reached.

To ensure a good role for each student, two negotiations will proceed in parallel. The first will meet for its formal sessions in our usual classroom. The second will meet in Weil Hall on October 8, and in Rubenstein G-21 on October 10, if the negotiators decide to continue in a formal session in class that day. To keep each negotiation an independent event, to the extent practical, students from one negotiation are asked not to consult in detail with students participating in the other.

The head of state for each team will be the ultimate decision-maker as to whether or not to complete an agreement and on what terms. At the first in-class session, during the formal part of the meeting, only each team's negotiator will be permitted to speak, and he or she should prepare opening remarks of 5-10 minutes in length. Those remarks should be discussed with other team members and approved by the head of state. For each team, the Foreign Minister or Secretary of State will serve as that team's negotiator. (In real life, it would typically be a lower-level official, at least until the final moments of a negotiation.) After the opening statements, negotiators are free to react and discuss as they wish, but in that formal session, only the negotiators may speak (others can deliver instructions or suggestions to their country's negotiator by note or by whispering in their ear if desired). That first opening session will be chaired by one of the faculty, acting as the Secretary-General of the United Nations (though in real life, the UN is rarely involved in such talks).

## **Scenario**

It is 1 February 2021. The New START Treaty will expire on 5 February 2021, unless the parties agree to an extension, which by the terms of the treaty may last for up to five years without any further ratification processes being required. Both parties have adhered to the central limits of New START and their force structures reflect that. Russia is developing, but has not yet deployed, novel weapons outlined by President Putin in a speech on March 1, 2018.<sup>1</sup>

The INF Treaty is defunct. Both parties have withdrawn from it, each blaming the other side for violations. Russia has deployed several battalions of INF-range SSC-8 cruise missiles, with four launchers each and a greater number of missiles. The United States has tested, but not yet deployed, a new INF-range missile.

You should assume that each country's force structure is largely consistent with the assigned readings.

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly," March 1, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>. (The speech covers many topics; searching for "nuclear" will bring you to the relevant passages.) The weapons described include, among others, a nuclear-powered intercontinental nuclear torpedo, a nuclear-powered cruise missile, and a hypersonic weapon capable of maneuvering in the atmosphere at high speed. For a taste of the flavor of public reaction in the United States, see, for example, the coverage on the "Today" show, March 1, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBcrESnizBQ>.

China, Russia, and the United States have agreed to meet to discuss the possibility of a trilateral nuclear arms control agreement (or, potentially, of bilateral agreements between any two of them, which might or might not be accompanied by informal commitments from the other of the three). Even agreeing to discuss such possibilities represents a change for Beijing, but China has not signaled its commitment to join any such an agreement. That will be a decision for those playing Chinese roles.

All participants should bear in mind that in the U.S. system, treaties require consent to ratification by two-thirds of the Senate, a very difficult political hurdle. Hence, in addition to the particular terms of an agreement, teams may wish to consider whether to pursue it as a legally binding treaty, an executive agreement, or some less formal arrangement.

Participating delegations have wide latitude to decide which systems will be discussed and perhaps limited. These may include: deployed strategic nuclear forces; intermediate nuclear forces; tactical nuclear forces; non-deployed nuclear weapons; ballistic missile defenses; and “novel” systems that could deliver nuclear weapons or threaten nuclear weapons or command and control. An agreement could be broad or narrow in scope, depending on the choices made by participants.

Given time constraints, participants will not be expected to formulate treaty language. Rather, you should consider a framework that would address at least:

- central limits (how many of what type of system will be covered);
- counting rules (which may ascribe numbers to systems either for ease of verification or for stability reasons);
- means for declaring and verifying stocks of the limited items;
- dispute resolution; and,
- duration.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping remain in power. The identity of the U.S. President will be chosen at the outset by the American team. While policies and actions need not be identical to those of the current office-holders, they should be consistent with national interests, logic, political plausibility, and the laws of physics.

To develop your negotiating approach, it will be important to discuss and decide on what nuclear forces your country needs to have and why, and what aspects of the other countries’ postures that might plausibly be addressed in an agreement pose the most important issues for your country. Hence, each team will be asked to submit to the instructors brief statements of its policies on force structure, doctrine, and posture before the first day of negotiation (see description below). Your negotiating positions should be consistent with these statements. Whether or not a team’s statement is revealed to other teams is a matter for each team to decide.

You should take as the political context the current events of today. Assume that present-day patterns of competition and cooperation continue, although teams are free to alter them during the talks, within the limits of plausibility.

## Assignments

**5:00 p.m., Monday, October 7, 2019:** 2-3 pp. team memo on doctrine, force structure, and posture. Each team should submit a brief statement of:

- its strategy of deterrence, including who it perceives as adversaries to be deterred and broad categories of what it intends to hold at risk;
- what changes, if any, it wishes to make to existing force structure as a result of that strategy (bearing in mind that such changes usually take time and cost money), including areas it might be prepared to restrain or reduce in a negotiated agreement; and,
- how its forces would be postured, e.g. launch on warning, launch under attack, de-mated, etc.

**5:00 pm., Monday, October 7, 2019:** A 1-2 pp. team memo on the negotiating approach you plan to take – what you will ask for, what you will be prepared to offer, what you might threaten, and perhaps fall-back positions you can envision. This should be informed by your assessment of how well your country would fare if no deal is reached – that is, in negotiations jargon, your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA).

**10:15 a.m., Tuesday, October 8, 2019:** a brief (5-10 minutes) opening statement to start negotiations. Each team should articulate what it wants the other teams to hear about its goals for the negotiations, including, if appropriate, any broad proposals for consideration. All participants should have input to the statement, which is to be approved by the head of state and delivered by the negotiator.

**5:00 p.m., Monday, October 14, 2019:** brief (2-3 pp.) reflection on the simulation. **Each participant** should write a commentary on the outcome of the exercise addressing whether or not the outcome was a good one in terms of national interest and international stability, what were the challenges to reaching an agreement, and how those challenges were or might have been overcome.

## Specific Team Instructions

**China:** After formulating the statement of doctrine, force structure, and posture, your first task is to decide how your approach to the negotiations. To date, Beijing has refused to join formal arms talks: see <https://thebulletin.org/2019/09/trilateral-arms-control-initiative-a-chinese-perspective/>. Given that China's nuclear arsenal is much smaller than those of Russia or the United States, and that most agreements are based on a principle of equality, some Chinese commentators have asked rhetorically, "Do you want to come down to our level, or for us to rise to yours?" Either outcome would likely discomfit Russia and the United States. On the other hand, China would like to constrain U.S. missile defenses and offensive forces (both nuclear and non-nuclear) that it believes could undermine its deterrent; would probably like to constrain Russian forces as well; does not want to see a renewed arms competition between the United

States and Russia, which it sees as dangerous; wants to avoid or constrain the deployment of INF-range systems in its region, particularly nuclear ones; and would like to avoid what it calls an “arms race in outer space.” You are to decide whether, to achieve some of these goals (or others you may decide on), China is prepared to negotiate constraints on its nuclear forces and posture that the United States or Russia may seek. If the Chinese team decides to join the negotiations, it should pursue a strategy to protect its chosen force structure, doctrine, and posture. If the Chinese team decides not to participate in the negotiations, it should be prepared to react to any agreement that Russia and the United States conclude, and to defend its position to the world.

**Russia:** After articulating a statement of doctrine, force structure, and posture, you should craft a negotiating position that supports it. Russia renounced the Soviet Union's (dubious) no first use pledge because it saw nuclear weapons as a means to offset conventional force inferiority. Although Russia is modernizing its nuclear forces, it would prefer to maintain the predictability and monitoring of U.S. forces offered by arms control agreements if it can do so on terms that it sees as improving Russian security, rather than being faced with an unlimited competition with the United States. In the past, Russia has proposed extending New START, though it is concerned about U.S. approaches to modifying U.S. missile submarines to reduce their number of missiles and U.S. bombers to convert them for non-nuclear missions that it believes are unverifiable. Like China, Russia is concerned about U.S. missile defenses and precision-strike conventional weapons that it believes could undermine its deterrent.<sup>2</sup> Moscow would like to avoid U.S. deployment of INF forces in Europe, especially ballistic missiles like the Pershing II, which it worries could pose a quick-strike threat of a decapitating attack on Russian command and control (though arguably U.S. missile submarines already pose such a threat). Russia has also long been interested in trying to eliminate U.S. deployments of non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe. While total Russian defense spending has been rising in recent years, it is a fraction of the U.S. budget and has even been eclipsed by China. The Russian economy is roughly a tenth of the size of that of the United States, and a twentieth of NATO's, which shapes Russia's view of the dangers of full competition with the United States. Moreover, the Russian economy has been hobbled by sanctions and beset by inefficiencies, resulting in low growth <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/05/27/the-russian-economy-is-stagnating-a65760> Still, Russia is far ahead of the United States in upgrading its strategic forces, with over 80 percent of its systems having been modernized in recent years, even though the new weapons described in Putin's speech have not yet been deployed.

**United States:** First, the U.S. team should decide who was elected President in 2020, and post that result to the class webpage. The team should then construct a statement of doctrine, force structure, and posture, including a policy toward missile defenses. Based on that broad statement, the U.S. team should construct a negotiating position, to include whether or not to pursue agreements that include China, or the historical approach if bilateral deals with Russia, or some combination. To date, the Trump Administration has not endorsed extending the New START Treaty. In the past, the United States has been concerned about the overall scale of Russian strategic forces; about Russia's non-strategic nuclear forces (which are much larger than those of the United States); about Russia's new types of strategic weapons, such as hypersonic weapons and the nuclear torpedo (which are not covered by the definitions of strategic weapons

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<sup>2</sup> Putin's description of the situation in his speech provides a useful summary of the Russian view.

in New START); and about Russian multiple-warhead silo-based ICBMs, which are both vulnerable to U.S. attack and pose a threat to U.S. ICBM silos, and which the United States, therefore, regards as destabilizing. Historically, the United States has taken the lead in making specific proposals and the Soviet Union and then Russia have reacted, including with counterproposals. China has no history of participating in arms control negotiations. Finally, U.S. participants should be aware of, and have a policy toward, the strategic modernization program first articulated by President Barack Obama and later endorsed (with some additions) by President Donald Trump.