

# THE FALLACY OF THE INF TREATY

by Jean-Marie Benoist

"To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."

— Sun Tzu

1988 will be the year of implementation of the INF Treaty signed on December 8, 1987, by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev. The ratification debate constitutes a tough battle, but like it or not, the treaty is a fact, and it has already stirred up momentum in favor of more disarmament, thus initiating the most severe crisis NATO has known for years. What is necessary now is to try to join forces intellectually in order to be able to address this crisis with all resources available.

In 1983, fortunately, Alliance resolve prevailed and the deployment of the INF (intermediate-range nuclear forces), known as Euromissiles, took place. It is not an exaggeration to say that it was a victory of the Americans and the Europeans together, a bigger success than any since the creation of NATO. The chances of peace through deterrence thus had been dramatically enhanced. Today, unfortunately, the West is facing the risk of a denuclearization of Western Europe, which would lead to gradual control of our continent by the Soviet Union and disruption of some of Europe's vital links with the United States.

The question of the zero-zero option and the INF Treaty should be discussed from three points of view: 1) How did the West get there? 2) What aspects of the crisis does the current treaty illustrate? 3) What can be done to limit the dangers and inconveniences of this situation?

**Architecture of Deterrence.** To characterize the present danger, one could say that what is at stake, and in peril, is the architecture of deterrence that has preserved peace in Europe and the United States for more than forty years. This architecture implies several factors. The most important is the presence of weapons across the spectrum, requiring certain levels and thresholds, both quantitative and qualitative, that enable the whole system to inhibit a Soviet nuclear first strike or a conventional or chemical attack by the forces of the Warsaw Pact.

One has to recall that the definition of deterrence is the capacity to prevent or inhibit any initiative of the adversary by showing one's resolve and multiplying the complexity of one's

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response to a point that would fool or defeat the calculations made by the chess player on the other side. This has been achieved now for forty years. In confronting the Soviet evolution toward a dangerous buildup of arms in recent years, the Alliance has been able to reinforce its ability to defeat the Soviet initiative, thanks to the deterrence that the Pershing II and cruise missiles have provided.<sup>1</sup>

This vital scheme now is at risk of being impaired by a series of illusions and mental traps, which the U.S. negotiators unwittingly have swallowed, along with some European experts, because of a lack of strategy and of certain doubts and hesitations as to the policy to be conducted.

## **HOW DID WE GET THERE?**

A few hypotheses must be examined concerning these mental traps and illusions that have been at the root of this plan to dismantle the vital rung of the ladder of deterrence: Pershing II and cruise missiles as well as the SRINF (shorter-range intermediate nuclear force).

The first mental trap is the importance given to arms control. Instead of remaining the means to achieve a policy, arms control has gradually become an end in itself. This devastating substitution of goals, in which arms control has become a kind of idealistic pursuit, has caused a subtle perversion of thinking, blinding the West to the threat posed by the adversary. The search for peace at any price has become an incantation, and illusion has therefore prevailed.

**Idolatry of Arms Control.** It is indeed one of the weaknesses of Western democracies that they believe in a magic inference: the self-delusion that controlling the development of weapons might consolidate the chances of peace. Obviously, this is a sophism, because it consists of substituting the desire to obtain "deals" with the adversary for the necessity of achieving readiness through a reasonable maintenance of forces and strength. This may be perceived as a feature of our common decadence, as the idolatry of arms control has gradually established itself in government circles as well as in public opinion, instead of remaining the means for effecting a global policy and strategy.

Corollary to this is the second mental trap: the illusion that when one has weapons in one's possession one is bound, in the long run, to use them. This is the second sophism, which has been refuted by the success of deterrence for forty years. In reverse, deterrence rests on prohibiting the use of weapons, provided one retains them in sufficient quantity and quality, accompanied with resolve. This is very well known, but one must try to measure

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<sup>1</sup> SDI, combined with offensive weapons, will play a major role in enhancing and enriching the complexity of "flexible response." Even partly deployed, a combination of SDI, the U.S. nuclear strategic system (MX and the like), the French and British nuclear deterrents, the Pershing II, the cruise missiles, the other types of INF and tactical nuclear weapons, the N-bomb, the future ATBM, and conventional weaponry — all these interdependent assets together, through their complexity, can make the calculations of the Soviet military planners more difficult and thereby deter attack.

the mental drift that has contaminated the analysis of experts who support the erroneous deal that has stirred such undue euphoria.

The third source of error is to be found in the tendency to address strategic issues in a piecemeal approach. The West, in general, has an unfortunate mental habit: it simply tends to forget the historical course and the global nature of the Soviet strategy. For the Soviet Union, sitting at the negotiating table is not an act in itself, nor a self-contained pattern of behavior. It is an element that plays its part within the framework of a global strategy.

For those who know the history of Leninism and the Soviet record of non-compliance with treaties they have signed, it is very difficult to share the optimism of those Americans who say that taking the Soviets back to the "bargaining table" is a victory in itself. The West indeed does not analyze carefully enough the reasons for which the Soviets decided to return to the negotiating table after their spectacular walk-out at Geneva. This return has to be reinserted into the dialectical process of a Leninist state that uses propaganda, disinformation, indirect moves, and the negotiations themselves as ways to conduct war through other means.

**Propaganda War.** "Two steps backwards, one step forward" is a precept coined by Lenin that applies here. After the elimination of the neutron bomb through a propaganda war and before their future attempts to cripple the American SDI, the Soviets needed to deal with such efficient American weapons as the Pershing IIs. They had failed at preventing their deployment, in spite of their full-steam effort of propaganda through the pacifist movements — an effort that fell through — and so they decided to come round. They targeted the Geneva talks as a way of gaining an unfair advantage: the elimination of the feared Pershing IIs at a very cheap price.

The Soviet Union, as is known, reversed the Clausewitzian phrase that war is a continuation of politics by other means. For them, politics is a continuation of war by other means, and among political means, their peace offensive is central. Their sitting at a negotiating table, contrary to the mirror image of good faith that naive Westerners project upon their adversary, has to be perceived for what it is: a war move. It is a war move accomplished in order to advance their goals to disrupt the alliance and to destabilize the stability that deterrence has achieved for peace.

**Pandora's Box.** The West, in sticking to its prior offer of a zero option taken literally, has kindly offered the Soviets an opportunity for achieving their goal of disarming Western Europe. One can now see the Pandora's Box of destabilization opened to the possibility of a triple zero option, which could eliminate the shorter-range missiles and preclude the possibility of conventionally armed cruise missiles. East Germany's Honecker already speaks more and more overtly of a complete denuclearization of the whole of Germany — both East and West — which is the fulfillment of Gorbachev's strategy to eliminate Western nuclear weapons in order to put Free World deterrence in complete jeopardy.

What we really are seeing is a series of moves on a chessboard: the elimination of the men of the Western camp, one after the other. Removing first the Pershing II and the cruise missiles is the equivalent of taking the Bishops and the Knights among Western

assets in the center of the board. Then attacks will be launched against the Rooks, which are the strategic central nuclear systems, especially those of Britain and France; they will be attacked through propaganda action and resurrected peace movements. Finally, they will try to take the Queen: SDI. German public opinion has been taken "en passant," like a forward man through a move on the center of the chess board: the disarmament mythology has created a momentum against the very idea of possessing nuclear weapons, as if possession automatically leads to their use.

**Dangerous Utopia.** This misleading view regrettably has been held both by the pacifist hordes of Europe and by some officials in the United States, who wrongly believe that nuclear weapons could be "wiped from the face of the earth." This very odd coalition of minds is engaged in the most dangerous kind of Utopia, suddenly mistrusting weapons as if they were creating the possibility of conflicts instead of averting them. On the contrary, it is the destabilization of a situation that has prevailed for forty years. The result is the risk of leaning toward the possibility or even the plausibility of a limited nuclear conflict or a conventional war in Europe, together with improved opportunity for the Soviets for intimidating Germany and the rest of Western Europe through the Warsaw Pact's undeniable superiority in conventional weapons.

The possibility of a conflict has now been increased because the intermediary echelons of deterrence will be removed. There will be a gap, a hole in the wall that will alter the continuity of the deterrence structure. The presence of the Pershing IIs, accurate American weapons able to strike military targets deep in the territory of the Soviet Union, has had an irreplaceable deterrent value. It also linked the tactical nuclear weapons to the strategic ones; the ultimate responses of the central nuclear systems. Now, the paradox is that more weight and more demand will be put upon the central nuclear strategic systems of the U.S. to guarantee deterrence and to inhibit a possible Soviet attack. This pressure will be unbalanced, as the challenge becomes: "who, what government would dare escalate in a jump to the lethal extremes of massive retaliation, where before the possibility existed of a more gradual continuity across the spectrum?" The deterrent value of this continuity of an arc of weapons across the spectrum came from the fact that it multiplied the uncertainty factor, and at the same time, expressed resolve and the ability to resort to an early nuclear use by the West. This was sufficient to inhibit Soviet planners.

**Fundamental Concept.** Now the INF treaty damages what deterrence is about: not only the continuity of this arc of weapons across the spectrum and across the Atlantic Ocean, but the fundamental concept of deterrence as a logic of war denied. We seem now to be drifting slowly toward the creeping admission that conflicts are possible, whereas deterrence in its complete network of complex and interactive arms may be summed up as creating "the conditions of impossibility of any war."

The fourth trap is the fallacious concept of parity acquired through bargaining. This misleading image of parity acquired at the negotiating table is based on two erroneous grounds: the postulate of symmetry as a stabilizing factor, and the projection to the strategic field of the concept of moral equivalence. Western negotiators and their advisers have been entrapped in this mirror imaging to the point of forgetting the insuperable fact that the situation toward the East is asymmetrical. The situation is not asymmetrical only in the

political and dialectical domains: we face a Leninist state whose values, principles, goals, and ways to achieve them are radically different from ours; they do not respect law *per se*, and they do not abide by treaties in the same way we do. Their long tradition of noncompliance and the ruthless policy of conquest imposed on Europe by Lenin and Stalin (as well as the brutal crushing of Hungary and Czechoslovakia during the so-called *détente* era) are there to illustrate that.

But the West is also dealing with a strategic and military asymmetry of which we should have made better use. One of the keys to this asymmetry is the fact that the presence of nuclear assets in Western Europe and in the Alliance at large deters not only a Soviet nuclear attack but also a conventional or chemical initiative from the Warsaw Pact. This asymmetry is also quantitative, and it would be wrong to believe that the zero-zero option is a "good bargain" because the Soviets would remove three to six weapons of each category to one removed by the West. This "bean counting" is not convincing, because it tends to overlook the qualitative asymmetry that exists between the ultra performance of the highly accurate Pershing II and that of the obsolescent SS-20. The quality of the weapons, their nature, and their status within the structural network of the deterrence apparatus is not similar from one camp to the other: weapons are not isolated elements that can be exchanged for each other in a kind of horse trading; they are related and play an interactive role within their respective networks according to their location and potentiality.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF THE DANGERS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE TREATY**

On the basis of these various illustrations, a situation has been created in which it is claimed that the Pershing IIs and cruise missiles had been deployed only in a build up/build down dynamic with negotiations in view. The Western Euromissiles, it is said, would have to be removed the day the SS-20s were. This superficial rationale has been by-passed by events: it is wrong to project to 1987 the situation that prevailed in 1979, when the Europeans, aware of the threat posed by the SS-20, led NATO into what is known as "the dual track" decision. This projection of 1979 to 1987 simply ignores the fact that, since 1979, the Soviets have continued to deploy a wide number of new arms systems which increase the threat both quantitatively and qualitatively. The consequence is that the presence of Pershing IIs and cruise missiles is now justifiable *se*, given the asymmetry with the SS-20.

The Pershings, as is known, are very accurate. Their definition in view of the overall system of Western deterrence is: an American weapon, based on the soil of Europe, able to reach with optimal accuracy vital points in the territory of the Soviet Union. It is understandable that the Soviets wanted to be rid of them by any means, just as they want to be rid of Western SDI, because they know perfectly well that the SDI of the Free World is asymmetrical to their own defensive weapons, being more effective because of a comprehensive and integrative network and also because the microelectronics of the West are superior to the Soviets' for battle management in particular.

In this past decade, the Soviets had three goals: First, kill the N-bomb, because it had an efficient deterrent value at an early stage of a battle, be it conventional or nuclear. They

achieved that goal with the help of the Carter Administration after an enormous propaganda offensive. Second, deprive the West of the Pershing II, because of its efficient deterrence capacity, and third, paralyze SDI, which is by-passing their own defense systems. The two latter goals are in the process of being obtained in the aftermath of Reykjavik: the Pershing II will be removed in accordance with the Washington treaty of December 1987, and the SDI will be tackled by an immense effort of brainwashing of the media and influence on Congress. At the same time, action on the romantic pacifist soul of the Germans will continue, and pressure will be brought against the French and British nuclear deterrent systems through pacifist campaigns and intimidation. These moves are in store for the next six months. Then the slate will be pretty clean.

## **WHAT SHOULD AND MIGHT BE DONE**

Discussing all the aspects of the grip of the arms control ideology on the Western mind would go beyond the scope of this lecture. However, the recommendation could be made for the West to turn a more lucid look toward this transformation of arms control into a goal: arms control for arms control's sake should be demystified. It is driven fundamentally by the political dynamics of the democracies and their craving for peace, rather than by a clear assessment of the reality of the international situation. The serious part of the arms control negotiation is now far too much confined to what occurs between the inside players in American politics, namely Congress and the bureaucratic surrogates of the Administration. If the actual threat of the Soviet Union is taken into account at all, its motives and requirements are usually simply assumed to mirror those of the United States.

But, as arms control might have an impact on the Alliance relationship, a first principle of reality should be clarified in its supporters' minds, the negotiators as well as Congress, that European security is seriously affected by this agreement, which was made above the head of Europe, even though it would entail the continuous visit of Soviet "inspectors" on European territory. And this is by no means a Eurocentric position, as the U.S. has to be gently reminded, since Europe is, according to the words of President Reagan recently in Venice, "the front line of American defense and security."

**Leninist Framework.** A second caveat could come from the historic experience of the Europeans in dealing with Soviet deeds and activities on their continent. The Leninist framework has to be brought back into the assessment of the situation by U.S. experts, who should quickly drop their psychological treatment of Mr. Gorbachev, as if he were an autonomous figure disconnected from the monolithic system that nurtured him.

Europeans should not take for granted the mythology of the fatal withdrawal of America from the European continent. Crippling the Alliance is no policy, and the essential solidarity of American and European security has been reasserted many times. Secretary Weinberger, writing in September 1987, solemnly recalled that European and American security were indivisible.<sup>2</sup> But Europeans, on the other hand, have to let it be known that they are ready to live up to the need, which is mutual commitment. It is vital, at the same

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<sup>2</sup> *Le Monde*, Paris, September 12, 1987.

time, that they must deplore the role of this venture of arms control, as undercutting the strategy of the Alliance, and so inform the U.S. Administration and Congress.

In this psychological context, it would be damaging to let the American allies believe that the Europeans are taking for granted a complete withdrawal of the U.S. presence in Europe. Isolationism and the syndrome of "fortress America" have to be fought and defeated in both U.S. and European minds. The duty of the European allies is, on the contrary, to reinforce all the strength of the various links that bind Europe and the U.S., not only politically and strategically, but also with regard to the values they share and the democratic institutions they have as a common heritage. The Europeans should give more consideration to the fact that American partnership in the Alliance with the various financial and technological burdens it entails is not an automatic right of Europe. We have to "deserve" it, so to speak, in showing readiness and an ability to take up our defense responsibilities with more resolve and more dignity. The issue of "burden sharing" is rightly in the air.

Several resolutions may be made in this respect:

- ◆ The Europeans must try seriously to organize what is called the European pillar of the Alliance.

- ◆ In case of ratification and implementation of the arms treaty, the Western Europeans have to develop an emergency plan to supplement the INF rung of the deterrence ladder. Some Franco-British conversations already are aiming at this. Germany should be involved rapidly, as the battle for maintaining a certain number of nuclear missiles on its soil is not yet completely lost. One has, in fact, to check the present momentum toward a denuclearization of Western Europe and especially of Germany, remembering that Germany in 1983 fought and won the main psychopolitical victory in accepting the deployment of Pershing IIs and cruise missiles. Coming back to a kind of "nuclear virginity" would be a regression.

- ◆ Two strategies may be thought of, depending on the congressional attitude. The first would be to help 34 courageous Senators kill the treaty by not ratifying it. A side effect would be the temporary impetus given to the Soviet propaganda effort, which would expose to the world a lack of U.S. consistency and reliability. This is a minor concern: after all, SALT II was never ratified and U.S. prestige survived. As former U.S. Ambassador to France Evan Galbraith puts it, "The crucial question is: will the elimination of the Pershing IIs and cruise missiles lead to the neutralization of Germany? There is a substantial risk that it will, and to accept that risk in exchange for 1,200 weapons is absurd."

If Congress does not ratify the treaty, the side effects would be minor. It would be easy to show that the Soviets have such a record of noncompliance with the treaties they have signed that they are not entitled even to speak about the validity of the signature of the U.S. Given what is at stake, the Senators who opposed the treaty would be seen as patriots and solid friends of the Alliance.

If ratification goes through, it should be linked to a series of provisos and amendments forming a straitjacket of strict conditions during the gradual implementation of the treaty. This should include verification on the whole of the Soviet territory, no further dismantling of Free World assets, a substantial and monitored decrease in the conventional and nuclear threats of the Soviet Union, and so on. This would result in a standstill in the process of dismantling. The principle remains as a guideline: do not tie the hands of the next U.S. Administration.

◆ Along with this attitude should come the expressed resolve of Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and perhaps Spain to bundle up their resources to build the European pillar of the Alliance with dignity and readiness and to increase their military expenditures within the framework of a rapprochement with the Allies. This would clarify once and for all that the essential nuclei of our common defense should never be left to the mercy of extemporized arms talks. This would defeat the myth of Eurospecific solutions and show to the world that the more European responsibility there is, the more influence Europe has with the U.S.

This agreement of France, Britain, and Germany would take place within NATO. France is already in the process of a dramatic evolution, as the initiatives of Prime Minister Jacques Chirac have shown. The French are no longer entrenched in the isolationist, superior, selfish position they have held in recent decades. France is moving toward a concrete reappraisal of her necessary solidarity with her neighbors and allies and toward a recognition of her responsibilities in granting harbors and other facilities to the Alliance in case of conflict. This is not yet the officially proclaimed doctrine, but it is legitimate to say that France is steadily moving toward consideration of her essential solidarity with the Allies.

There is no need for France to rejoin the integrated military command of NATO, as the freedom of decision to use the French "force de frappe" is an asset of NATO, because it adds to the logic of uncertainty and complexity which is the root of deterrence. But it no longer would be taboo to speak of France's regaining a legitimate seat at the NATO planning committee round table.

More ambitious, but as necessary, the Europeans should also demonstrate to their American allies the importance of a fundamental reappraisal of the Alliance, not challenging its goals and scope, but addressing the question of its ways and means in a global strategic environment. The Europeans have to help the American government state clearly what its doctrine is in the assessment of the Soviet threat. From the State Department to other government agencies, there exists a world of complete fantasy as to what the Leninist threat is. U.S. government officials as well as public opinion seem so vulnerable to the apparent qualitative leap that Mr. Gorbachev has achieved in propaganda that there is now a clear necessity to return to reality. Europeans must urgently explain to the Americans what the real danger is and its continuity toward the Leninist tradition of Soviet expansionism and deception.

◆ SDI is one of the crucial domains in which everyone should be more outspoken, in a way that would challenge the rationale that President Reagan used in 1983 in presenting



SDI to the world. We have to dissent from the phrase used by the President when he credited his defensive space shield with the goal of helping "to remove the horror of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth." Our vital endorsement of the relevance of SDI is the following: even partly deployed, the defense systems of the West will be a major part of the overall system of deterrence, and combined with offensive weapons they can enhance and enrich the efficiency of the common network of deterrence.

Of course, research and development, and testing in the field as well as in the laboratory are important as uncertainty and complexity multiply. As a consequence, the U.S. should not settle for a restricted interpretation of the ABM Treaty of 1972, but should remain free to use the broad interpretation as necessary to implement the full scope of this program. The reaffirmation of the importance of both defensive and offensive systems is needed to ensure the worth of the whole complex and the evolving architecture of deterrence.

**Fear and Sorrow.** On November 6, 1987, General Secretary Gorbachev said that deterrence and nuclear weapons are immoral, and that they are the bad aspects of the NATO doctrine. It is understandable that he should say so when speaking under the umbrella of his own megatons. But to hear the same statement from the mouth of President Reagan is cause for fear and sorrow.

This is why we all have a duty to put a caveat and a robust nuance to the rationale of "mutual survival" as opposed to the MAD doctrine. If we still militate for the maintenance of flexible response in a new key, it is because we know it may include SDI as an increment to the role of nuclear weapons across the spectrum of weapons. Not only the major systems of SDI but also the extended air defense systems and the anti-tactical ballistic missile are components of a plan in which gradually the offensive quality of deterrence and its defensive aspects will be knit together.<sup>3</sup>

## **THE ALLIANCE NEW FRONTIER**

This constitutes a great project, a design for the future of the Alliance, and a solid ground for our common strategy of survival in peace and freedom. This is our new frontier. Our common duty is still to challenge the folly of the zero-zero option, which tears fatally at the seam of deterrence. We have to fight the perverse use of the myth of parity and the projection of the illusion of moral equivalence on the strategic realm. Quality and asymmetry are the new roots of the Alliance strategy: the Europeans would rather have 100 SS-20s still staring at them if even 10 Pershing IIs could be kept, as deterrence is a qualitative and not a quantitative concept.

It is hoped that the strategic planners at the Pentagon, who are initiating the concept of a "discriminate deterrence," will accept the integration of this essential dimension of the Alliance as a solid network of mutual strategic interests, involving two pillars: the U.S. and West European. The more cables there are at all levels, the more security there is, in view of the principle of interdependence of all the Western weapons on a complex network,

<sup>3</sup> See Jean-Marie Benoist "Enriching deterrence through space defense," in "Défense spatiale et dissuasion," symposium of the CERIS, 1987, Paris.

which is the web of deterrence. As Eugene Rostow points out: "Intermediate-range weapons are not a separate category, because every target they can reach can also be reached by long-range ground-based or sea-based weapons. And nuclear arms cannot be abolished."<sup>4</sup>

The Europeans and Americans together should decide that, as a preamble to any arms reduction talks, the indispensable nuclei of the assets of deterrence should remain untouched and declared nonnegotiable. Taking these quantities out of the grip of the negotiators is a necessity that should be agreed among the NATO powers to defeat the chess game Gorbachev is playing against the West and the Free World.

But Europeans also should start considering seriously, in close understanding with the American Allies, what the European pillar of the Alliance requires. This is a *sine qua non*. If it is true that the Americans will get the Europeans they deserve — see Germany now — it is also true that the Europeans will get the Americans they deserve.



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<sup>4</sup> Eugene V. Rostow, "Caution, Go Slow in Ratifying the Treaty," *The New York Times*, Reprinted by the *International Herald Tribune*, January 6, 1988.