

FACT SHEET

American Security Enhanced: The Benefits of the New START Treaty

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February 05, 2013

It has been two years since the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) entered into force - with strong bipartisan support in the United States Senate. The New START Treaty, which replaces the expired START I Treaty, brings U.S. nuclear policies in line with security challenges of the 21st century and provides for balanced reductions in the world's two largest nuclear arsenals.

Several benefits to U.S. national security are associated with the Treaty:

New START enhances the United States' nuclear force planning.

Without the New START Treaty, the United States would not have the ability to verify what the Russians are doing. This would force the U.S. military to plan for a "worst case scenario" and overinvest in nuclear capabilities to prepare for a potential Russian buildup.

With the Treaty, the U.S. military can avoid wasting money on unnecessary nuclear weapons and use the best threat assessments available to structure its nuclear forces.

Inspections and other verification measures under New START enhance transparency.

The United States and Russia improved and streamlined the verification regime for New START, based on lessons learned from previous arms control agreements.

Data exchanges provide the transfer of technical information on numbers, locations, weapons, and facilities that are subject to the Treaty. Since entry into force the U.S. and Russia each conducted 36 on-site inspections, the maximum number allowed by the Treaty (18 per year). The countries have exchanged over 3,500 data notifications since the Treaty's entry into force.¹ These on-site inspections and data exchanges allow the United States to verify the size and composition of the Russian nuclear arsenal on a continual basis.



President Obama and President Medvedev sign the New START Treaty

Department of State, April 2010



The Treaty also guarantees that U.S. national technical means of surveillance, such as satellites, are not subject to Russian interference, and that the United States will have a variety of tools at its disposal for monitoring Russian compliance.

The ratification of New START has strengthened strategic stability between the United States and Russia.

The New START Treaty increases U.S.-Russian strategic stability by maintaining the predictability of nuclear relations between the two countries.

The New START verification regime allows the United States to gain greater insight into Russia’s nuclear arsenal. This increased flow of information allows for greater stability between the United States and Russia and provides a basis for pursuing the reduction of other weapons, such as Russia’s large stockpile of nonstrategic (short-range, low-yield) nuclear weapons.²

The United States is free to modernize its nuclear forces, and a bipartisan consensus exists for doing so.

Under the New START Treaty, the United States can safely reduce a number of outdated weapons while investing in steps to ensure the effectiveness of its nuclear deterrent. As stated in the Senate resolution to ratify, the United States is committed to “a robust stockpile stewardship program, and to maintaining and modernizing the nuclear weapons production capabilities and capacities” to ensure the “safety, reliability, and performance” of the U.S. arsenal.³

A tough fiscal environment has led to budget cuts for many defense-related programs, but bipartisan support for nuclear modernization has remained strong. In fiscal year 2012, Congress provided more than \$7 billion for the National Nuclear Security Administration’s nuclear weapons activities, an increase of \$340 million over the previous year. The president continued this trend in 2013, requesting a 5% increase in the nuclear weapons activities budget from the 2012 appropriated level.⁴

New START provides for an appropriate deterrent in line with modern threats.

The New START Treaty allows the United States to deploy 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads and retain 800 deployed and non-deployed strategic delivery vehicles – intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy bombers – and 700 deployed. As Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) pointed out, each of these warheads is “up to 30 times more powerful” than those used during World War II.⁵

Thanks to the data exchanges mandated under the Treaty, the United States now knows that Russia has already reduced its deployed strategic nuclear forces below the New START limit.⁶

New START preserves the United States’ missile defense independence.

The New START Treaty does not limit the United States’ ability to develop and deploy missile defenses. In fact, as Missile Defense Agency chief Lt. Gen. Patrick O’Reilly told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, New START actually “reduces constraints on the development of the missile defense program in key areas.”⁷

Since New START ratification, the U.S. has advanced its missile defense plans, increasing the number of missile interceptors in California and Alaska and conducting the first successful test of a next-generation



*Launch of the first IIF series of Global Positioning System satellites, which carry improved nuclear detonation detection instruments.
NNSA, May 2010*

missile interceptor in May 2012. The U.S. continues to work with NATO allies on plans for European missile defense. At the 2012 Chicago summit, NATO leaders declared “NATO has initiated a capability that, although limited in its initial phase, can provide real protection against ballistic missile attack.”⁸

New START allows the United States to focus on other vital nuclear security issues.

The New START Treaty was necessary to manage the threats posed by deployed strategic nuclear weapons. More than one year of “positive and pragmatic” New START implementation provides a sound basis for negotiating reductions in nonstrategic weapons, where Russia has a large advantage, and non-deployed nuclear weapons. These two categories of weapons have never been limited or monitored under an arms control agreement.⁹

In addition to future nuclear weapons negotiations, the Treaty places the United States in a better position to deal with a whole range of other nuclear security issues, such as nuclear proliferation and securing nuclear materials.¹⁰

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End Notes

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Building a New American Arsenal

The American Security Project (ASP) is a non-partisan initiative to educate the American public about the changing nature of national security in the 21st century.

Gone are the days when a nation's strength could be measured by bombers and battleships. Security in this new era requires a New American Arsenal harnessing all of America's strengths: the force of our diplomacy; the might of our military; the vigor of our economy; and the power of our ideals.

We believe that America must lead other nations in the pursuit of our common goals and shared security. We must confront international challenges with all the tools at our disposal. We must address emerging problems before they become security crises. And to do this, we must forge a new bipartisan consensus at home.

ASP brings together prominent American leaders, current and former members of Congress, retired military officers, and former government officials. Staff direct research on a broad range of issues and engages and empowers the American public by taking its findings directly to them.

We live in a time when the threats to our security are as complex and diverse as terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, failed and failing states, disease, and pandemics. The same-old solutions and partisan bickering won't do. America needs an honest dialogue about security that is as robust as it is realistic.

ASP exists to promote that dialogue, to forge consensus, and to spur constructive action so that America meets the challenges to its security while seizing the opportunities the new century offers.



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