

American Security Enhanced: *The Benefits of the New START Treaty*

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July 14, 2011

It has been over six months since the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) was ratified with strong bipartisan support in the United States Senate. The New START treaty replaces the expired START I treaty, brings American 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 American national security are associated with the treaty:

New START enhances American 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 American military to plan for a “worst case scenario” and prepare for a potential Russian nuclear buildup.

With the treaty, the American military avoids wasting money on nuclear weapons it doesn't need while using the best intelligence available to structure American 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.

New START allows for up to 18 on-site inspections per year. Data exchanges will include a transfer of technical information on numbers, locations, weapons, and facilities that are subject to the treaty.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.

The treaty guarantees that American national technical means of surveillance, such as satellites, will not be subject to Russian interference. New START guarantees 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 tactical (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

The United States has committed an additional \$85 billion in nuclear arsenal modernization funds over the next decade. The size of this investment prompted Senator Bob Corker (R-TN) to nickname the treaty the “Nuclear Modernization and Missile Defense Act of 2010.”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 launchers as well as 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy bombers. In a statement on the Senate floor, Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) pointed out that 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 America's missile defense independence.

The New START treaty does not contain limits on America's ability to develop and deploy missile defenses, and the United States is rapidly moving forward with its missile defense plans.

As Missile Defense Agency chief Lt. Gen. Patrick O'Reilly told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last year, New START "does not constrain our plans to execute the U.S. Missile Defense program" and actually "reduces constraints on the development of the missile defense program in key areas."⁷

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

The New START treaty was necessary to manage the threats posed by strategic nuclear weapons. Now that it has been ratified, the United States can pursue reductions in the large stockpile of Russian tactical nuclear weapons.

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.

(Endnotes)

1 U.S. Department of State, "Verification," *Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance*, April 8, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/139906.htm> (accessed July 13, 2011).

2 Union of Concerned Scientists, "New START Overview: Verification, Force Structure, and Requirements," May 26, 2011, http://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear_weapons_and_global_security/nuclear_weapons/policy_issues/new-start-general-fact-sheet.html (accessed July 13, 2011).

3 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *New START Treaty: Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification*, 112th Cong., 1st sess., 2010, 4, <http://foreign.senate.gov/download/?id=E4C3A1B3-D023-4F58-8690-DF624C73548C> (accessed July 13, 2011).

4 "Corker Outlines Support for New START Treaty, Says It Should Be Called 'Nuclear Modernization and Missile Defense Act of 2010,'" December 22, 2011, http://corker.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=News&ContentRecord_id=d922255a-d264-4654-870c-f107c3d05da4&ContentType_id=b94acc28-404a-4fc6-b143-a9e15bf92da4 (accessed July 13, 2011).

5 U.S. Senate, *Floor Statement by Senator Lamar Alexander*, December 21, 2010, "http://alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=Multimedia&ContentRecord_id=52b7462e-dd6d-42a0-a419-025b87585d51&ContentType_id=0ec10363-3bf1-4c12-8da4-af69332295df&Group_id=21953845-05d8-4679-ac01-8f80b7f2202d" (accessed July 13, 2011).

6 U.S. Department of State, "New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Arms," *Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance*, June 1, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/164722.htm#> (accessed July 13, 2011).

7 Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Unclassified Statement of Lieutenant General Patrick J. O'Reilly," hearing on *The New START Treaty: Views from the Pentagon*, June 16, 2010, 2-3, <http://foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/O%27Reilly,%20Gen.%20Patrick%20J.pdf> (accessed July 13, 2011).

Building a New American Arsenal

The American Security Project (ASP) is a bipartisan 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.



American Security Project

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