

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) between the United States and Russia was signed on April 6, 2010. It was submitted to the United States Senate a month later, and on December 22, 2010, a resolution of “advice and consent” to the ratification of the treaty passed with a vote of 71 to 26. On February 5, 2011, U.S. and Russian officials exchanged the instruments of ratification, and the treaty entered into force.

New START limits both the United States and Russia to 1,550 deployed strategic warheads, 30% below the upper limit of the 2002 Moscow Treaty. It also limits both parties to 800 deployed and non-deployed strategic delivery vehicles—ICBMs, SLBMs, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers—and 700 deployed. These reductions continue to cut down both countries’ oversized nuclear arsenals—a dangerous legacy of the Cold War—while allowing the U.S. military to preserve a flexible strategic deterrent. The new treaty is also an important part of a renewed strategic relationship with Russia, and a necessary first step toward future negotiations. Finally, New START reinforces the United States’ leadership in global nonproliferation efforts, giving the administration more credibility in dealing with ongoing proliferation concerns.

New START continues decades of building predictability through verification and cooperation with the Soviet Union and Russia. Through the on-site monitoring and data exchanges the treaty provides, U.S. knowledge of Russian strategic forces will be consistently updated. Moreover, it continues the U.S. commitment to cuts in nuclear arsenals as called for in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); many non-nuclear signatories to that treaty are calling for such cuts, which the nuclear weapons states pledged to make as part of the NPT.

### **Treaty limits, counting, and force structure**

The New START treaty represents modest but important reductions from the force levels under the original START agreement and the Moscow Treaty. The U.S. military was

directly involved in establishing the force levels under New START and they are confident that the U.S. nuclear deterrent will remain sufficient to address today’s threats.

Previous arms control treaties estimated the number of deployed warheads each nation had by counting each missile as carrying its maximum possible load. New START instead counts the actual number of warheads on each missile, giving a much more accurate assessment of the size of the deployed arsenals of the two countries. Heavy bombers are counted towards the warhead limit as one warhead for each bomber, regardless of that bomber’s actual capacity. This counting rule reflects the relatively stabilizing nature of bombers, which are not a first-strike delivery system, in the U.S.-Russian strategic relationship.

**“A responsible partnership between the world’s two largest nuclear powers that limits our nuclear arsenals while maintaining strategic stability is imperative to promoting global security.”**

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton,  
December 22, 2010

Unlike START I, New START allows each party the flexibility to determine its preferred force structure within the treaty limits. The United States has released an outline of how U.S. nuclear forces will be brought into compliance with New START. All 14 Ohio-class strategic submarines will remain in service, but will operate with 20 launch tubes instead of 24. The number of Minuteman III ICBMs will drop from 450 to no more than 420, with all missiles “de-MIRVed” to a single warhead (as most already are). No ICBM bases will be closed. The B-2 and B-52H bombers will retain their nuclear role, but 34 B-52Hs will be converted to a conventional-only role.

Russia and the United States must meet the central treaty limits within seven years after entry into force.

## Verification

Like START I, New START allows both parties to verify compliance with the treaty through data exchanges, exhibitions, on-site inspections, and national technical means such as reconnaissance satellites. Both parties must maintain a database listing the types and locations of all accountable warheads and delivery vehicles. Under a new requirement, each delivery vehicle is assigned its own unique identifier, which is used to track it from production, through its various deployments, and to its dismantlement. The initial exchange of the databases is required 45 days after entry into force; the first exchange took place in March 2011.

These data exchanges give the United States detailed information about Russia's arsenal; inspectors then verify this data using short-notice, on-site inspections. New START streamlines the inspections regime of START I—as both countries wanted—but the inspections will continue to gather all the information necessary to verify compliance.

The treaty provides for 18 on-site inspections per year. Each party is permitted ten Type One inspections and eight Type Two inspections. Type One focuses on locations with deployed and non-deployed strategic offensive arms, and confirms the accuracy of shared data, the number of warheads located on deployed ICBMs and SLBMs, and nuclear armaments on deployed heavy bombers. Type Two focuses on sites with non-deployed strategic offensive arms, confirming the conversion or destruction of arms, and the elimination of facilities. The fact that there are far fewer Russian facilities today than there were at the end of the Cold War, combined with the increased kinds of activities in each inspection, allows inspectors to obtain a complete picture of Russian forces while using fewer than the 28 inspections allowed under START. The resulting inspections regime gives the United States a full understanding of Russian forces and ensures that significant treaty violations will be caught, while

reducing the verification burden on U.S. facilities. On-site inspections were permitted to begin 60 days after entry into force; on April 13, 2011, the U.S. team arrived in Russia for their first on-site inspection in Russia.

The treaty also requires each country perform exhibitions of strategic systems for the other party. In March, Russia conducted an exhibition of the RS-24 road-mobile ICBM and its associated launcher. As this new missile was first deployed after the first START agreement expired, this was the first chance for American inspectors to examine it.

## Long-term benefits

The New START treaty will have benefits far exceeding the bilateral reduction in nuclear arsenals. The treaty continues the strategic relationship between the United States and Russia that was developed under START I. The treaty's verification measures allow for a fuller understanding of Russian forces than previous agreements, and this in turn leads to increased stability and cooperation between the two countries. Additionally, New START is an essential stepping stone to future treaties that address issues like Russian tactical nuclear weapons.

The treaty not only strengthens strategic stability between the United States and Russia, but also strengthens international nonproliferation efforts. Taking concrete steps toward nuclear reductions improves U.S. credibility on issues of nuclear nonproliferation. The New START agreement has been cited by non-nuclear weapons states as an essential component of strengthening international nonproliferation efforts. The cooperation of these countries is essential in tracking and preventing the illicit development and trade of nuclear weapons technology. The importance of New START was evident at the United Nations in 2010, when every country there except Iran endorsed the treaty, and the 2010 NPT Review Conference, where dozens of representatives commended the United States and Russia on their efforts.

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