



## New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) Factsheet: Reducing Russian and U.S. Nukes

### The Basics of New START

- The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) signed with Russia in April 2010 is a critical and essential first-step in strengthening U.S. nuclear security.
- The treaty will reduce deployed strategic warheads and delivery systems by 30% over seven years in Russia and the U.S., which together house more than 95% of the world's strategic nuclear weapons.
- The new treaty is the 4<sup>th</sup> in a series of agreements with Russia about strategic nuclear weapons reductions.
- Ratifying the New START treaty represents an important opportunity to act on a **bi-partisan national security priority**.

### We need New START to be ratified by the Senate now!

For a treaty to be ratified, it must be voted out of the Senate, also known as receiving the “advice and consent” of the Senate. A treaty requires two-thirds, or **67 votes of the Senate, to be ratified**.

First though, the treaty must make its way out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with a majority vote. On September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the New START Treaty **passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee** and is now waiting for a vote on the Senate floor. In the Committee vote, Senators Isakson (R-GA) and Corker (R-TN) voted for the treaty – a huge victory for the grassroots efforts in Georgia and Tennessee. Without this Republican support from the Committee, it would have been much harder to get 67 votes on the Senate floor. Now, with solid bi-partisan support behind it, New START **awaits a vote from the full Senate**.

Unfortunately the Senate was unable to have to floor vote on New START before the election. That's why a vote on New START when the Senators come back to work after the elections is so crucial – we can't go any longer without verification of the status of Russia's nuclear arsenal.

### Wide-Ranging Support for New START

Over **70 national security advisers and military officials** from eight different administrations and across both sides of the aisle have publicly announced their support for New START through hearings, letters, public statements, and in the media. The media coverage of New START has been **overwhelmingly positive**. Countless editorials and articles at the local and national level – by bi-partisan experts and politicians alike - have been cited in support of New START.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates wrote that "The U.S. is far better off with this treaty than without it." James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense of the Nixon and Ford administrations said: "I think that it is obligatory for the United States to ratify [New START]." A recent editorial by Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft and former Senator Jake Garn (R-UT) sums up the argument in favor of New START succinctly: "The New START treaty enhances American security and improves international stability. That is a very good reason. **The Senate should ratify it promptly.**"

### **International Cooperation: Improving U.S. Foreign Policy**

The New START treaty builds **stronger multilateral cooperation** on nuclear weapons issues, which is essential to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is the critical first step in gaining international cooperation needed to **prevent nuclear terrorism** and address growing hostile nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea. Swift U.S. ratification of the Treaty would communicate to the world that the U.S. is serious about its Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments and the obligation to take steps toward disarmament.

It has been many years since the Senate has voted on an arms control treaty of such significance. In 1999, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was not ratified because of obstructionism in the Senate, causing the U.S. to fail to capitalize on a critical international treaty. Given that ratifying CTBT is a key component of the NPT, this has inhibited the U.S. in the **dialogue about non-proliferation with other countries**. If New START were to fail, there would be little hope of a nuclear arms control being passed in the Senate in the foreseeable future. For the advocacy community, New START is a key entrée into further work on halting the proliferation and production of nuclear weapons.

### **Verification: Keeping Tabs on the Russian Nuclear Program**

The New START treaty provides for a state-of-the-art verification system, which makes it possible to track Russian nuclear activities, verify its nuclear reductions, and improve U.S. intelligence on Russian nuclear capabilities. Historically, having American inspectors on the ground in Russia has been the most effective way to **keep tabs on the Russian nuclear program**.

December 5<sup>th</sup> will mark the one year anniversary since the U.S. was last able to inspect the Russian nuclear program. Because we have not ratified this treaty, the U.S. intelligence-gathering has been interrupted and can no longer perform on-site inspections and monitor Russian nuclear sites. New START is the most efficient way to maintain a clear picture of Russian nuclear capabilities, count the number of warheads, and track their movement.

### **U.S.-Russia Relations: Working to Reduce the Nuclear Threat**

Experts have noted that this relationship is at its peak since the end of the Cold War, in part because of the time spent at the negotiating table on New START. **Russia is an essential partner** in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, especially as the U.S. looks to **contain Iran's nuclear ambitions**. Currently, nuclear weapons arsenals in the U.S. and Russia far exceed what is necessary to maintain an effective deterrent. Reducing the size of arsenals significantly lessens the possibility of nuclear war, nuclear theft, or accidents. By working in tandem with Russia on mutual reductions, U.S. strategic stability is not compromised. Perhaps most importantly, New START provides grounds to engage in

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further negotiations with Russia on reductions in tactical nuclear weapons, which are not included in the treaty. Ultimately, New START will bring enhanced **stability, transparency, and predictability** to this relationship.

## Impact of the Elections

Because 67 votes are necessary for New START, the election outcome has the potential to considerably affect whether or not the treaty is ultimately ratified. Following the 2010 midterm election, the expected margin in the **Senate is 53 Democrats and 47 Republicans**, which represents a six seat loss for Democrats. Therefore, at least **14 Republican votes are needed** in order to pass New START. This is complicated by the fact that three Senate seats this year were political appointments in Illinois, Delaware and West Virginia and after the elections, the winners immediately take those seats rather than in January with the rest of the new members of Congress. This could **tip the balance in the post-election session**, when New START may be up for a floor vote.

## Modernizing the Nuclear Weapons Complex

To maintain and modernize the U.S. nuclear weapons complex after a period of neglect, the Obama administration has proposed robust and even historic funding of \$180 billion over ten years – **the most funding for nuclear modernization in decades**. The funds will comprehensively address the needs of nuclear weapons facilities, including modernizing production complexes and maintaining strategic delivery systems. Although the Obama administration has committed to **making arsenals more effective and secure**, some opponents of the treaty have claimed that the proposed plans are not a serious enough commitment. However, New START does not affect the strategy or funding requirements to maintain an effective nuclear arsenal. It's important to recognize that the debate over funding should not deter the Senate from ratifying the New START treaty promptly.

## Engaging the Grassroots

An effective method to counter Republican reticence on New START is to organize and develop grassroots support for the treaty. Shortly after it was signed last April, CGS initiated a **grassroots campaign in Georgia and Tennessee** with the support of other NGOs. The field organizers are part of the *My Global Voice* program, a network that allows citizens in Tennessee and Georgia to develop policy ideas and communicate them effectively to opinion leaders. In Tennessee and Georgia, **we were able to:**

- Collect over **300 petition signatures** in Tennessee in support of New START
- Mobilize over 500 people to attend the Tennessee **premiere of Countdown to Zero**
- Present at **seven Rotary club meetings** through East Tennessee on the benefits of New START
- Organize in **8 lobby meetings** (4 with Senators Corker and 4 with Senator Isakson) on New START
- Speak on **local radio shows** on the benefits of New START in Georgia
- Speak to over 10 Church congregations with **a call to action on New START**
- Collect over **200 signed letters** in support of New START and deliver them to Senator Isakson

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