



American College of National Security Leaders

July 8, 2020

To: Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Rep. Eliot Engel
Rep. Michael McCaul
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C.

CC: Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Sen. Jim Risch
Sen. Bob Menendez

CC: Sponsors of S.2394
Sen. Todd Young
Sen. Chris Van Hollen

Dear Congressmen,

We write to you with our deepest concerns about the future of an important piece of the U.S. national security and arms control architecture. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) stands as the only legally binding agreement limiting the world's two largest nuclear arsenals—but it faces a very uncertain future.

On February 5, 2021, the agreement will expire unless President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin choose to extend it by up to five years. Should New START lapse, the risk of a nuclear arms race unfolding between the United States and the Russian Federation greatly increases. The expiration of New START will essentially take us back to 1972, when the Cold War was at its height, before the bipartisan, bicameral agreements preceding it took effect.

As former senior national security leaders and experts, we acutely understand the immense value arms control agreements' provide to our country's safety and security. We cannot allow New START expire.

New START provides both strategic weapons caps and rigorous inspection procedures. This agreement not only gives U.S. military officials unprecedented on-the-ground access to and inspections of the Russian arsenal, but also includes legally binding numerical limitations on strategic delivery systems and warheads. While confident in the abilities of our armed forces, we are also clear-eyed about the dangers that Russia's military modernization efforts present, as well as their unpredictable strategy of pursuing power.

Without New START, our military servicemen and women, as well as national security experts, would be forced to guess on how best to protect against Russia's strategic capabilities. Many of us know that conjecture and rumors only lead to heightened tensions and the increased chance of dangerous escalation. With the United States and Russia owning 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, there is no room for conjecture.

Many in the administration have argued that Russia's new nuclear weapons delivery systems would not be included in the treaty and thus New START should not be extended. Moscow, however, has stated that



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two of those systems—Sarmat, a new intercontinental ballistic missile, and Avangard, a hypersonic glide vehicle—would be covered. Meanwhile, the others, including a supposed nuclear-powered cruise missile, are not likely to be deployed before 2026, after a final five-year extension of New START. It makes much more sense to extend the treaty as soon as possible in order to keep limits on these weapon systems while the United States begins to chart a path forward on how to address those yet to be deployed.

China's arsenal is also a concern of those in the administration, who argue that Beijing should be included in an arms control agreement. Pursuing such an agreement with China, while laudable, cannot be concluded before the expiration of New START in 2021. Further, Beijing has not indicated a willingness to enter negotiations, and it would be dangerous to sacrifice an agreement that is working in hopes of negotiating a bigger agreement in such a short amount of time.

We ardently believe that the most prudent course of action available to the president is to immediately extend New START an additional five years. At the same time, the administration can engage with Russia and other parties about potential negotiations for a new arms control agreement that guarantees strategic stability. In this way, time is allocated for appropriate and detailed negotiations, taking into account all of Russia's current and future capabilities, as well as our own. We urge both the House of Representatives and the Senate to strongly consider all legislative efforts supporting New START extension, including the existing bills introduced by yourselves and your colleagues, S. 2394 and H.R. 2529.

Russia has stated numerous times that it is interested in extending the current agreement. All the United States needs to do is respond. The world has already experienced the anxiety, unpredictability and tension of a Cold War. In our combined national security experience, we see no reason for the United States to introduce another one.

Sincerely,

Brigadier General Clara Adams-Ender, USA (Retired)
Brigadier General Ricardo Aponte, USAF (Retired)
Vice Admiral Donald Arthur, USN (Retired)
Lieutenant General Ronald Blanck, USA (Retired)
Brigadier General Stephen A. Cheney, USMC (Retired)
Ambassador Herman J. Cohen (Retired)
Major General Peter Cooke, USA (Retired)
Major General J. Gary Cooper, USMC (Retired)
Major General Rick Devereaux, USAF (Retired)
Brigadier General John Douglass, USAF (Retired)
Brigadier General Jim Doty, USA (Retired)
Major General Paul Eaton, USA (Retired)
Major General Mari K Eder, USA (Retired)
Brigadier General Robert J. Felderman, USA (Retired)
Brigadier General Pat Foote, USA (Retired)
Vice Admiral Michael Franken, USN (Retired)
Lieutenant General Walter Gaskin, USMC (Retired)
Brigadier General Robert Glacel, USA (Retired)
Rear Admiral Stephen Glass, JAGC, USN (Retired)
Vice Admiral Kevin P. Green, USN (Retired)
Major General Richard S. Haddad, USAF (Retired)



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Major General Bob Harding, USA (Retired)
Rear Admiral Charles Harr, MD, USN (Retired)
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Ambassador Vicki Huddleston (Retired)
Ambassador Cameron Hume (Retired)
Rear Admiral John Hutson, USN (Retired)
Brigadier General David Irvine, USA (Retired)
Lieutenant General Arlen D. Jameson, USAF (Retired)
Brigadier General John H. Johns, USA (Retired)
Ambassador Patrick Kennedy (Retired)
Mr. Bruce S. Lemkin, Senior Executive Service (Retired)
Major General Steven J. Lepper, USAF (Retired)
Brigadier General Phil Leventis, USAF, ANG (Retired)
Major General Randy Manner, USA (Retired)
Ambassador Edward Marks (Retired)
Major General Frederick H. Martin, USAF (Retired)
Brigadier General Carlos E. Martinez, USAF (Retired)
Mr. J. R. McBrien, Senior Executive Service, Treasury (Retired)
Brigadier General Joseph Medina, USMC (Retired)
Rear Admiral David Oliver, USN (Retired)
Brigadier General J. Scott O'Meara, USMC (Retired)
Lieutenant General Charles P. Otstott, USA (Retired)
Major General John Phillips, USAF (Retired)
Ambassador Charles Ray (Retired)
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Brigadier General Francis X. Taylor, USAF (Retired)
Major General F. Andrew Turley, USAF (Retired)
Ambassador Edward Walker (Retired)
Brigadier General George Walls, USMC (Retired)
Brigadier General John Watkin, USA (Retired)
Brigadier General Marianne Watson, USA (Retired)
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