



Prospects for U.S.-Russian Strategic Nuclear Arms Control after the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review

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Bottom Line Up Front: Key Takeaways

- ▶ Implications of the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review and related developments in U.S.-Russian relations make future prospects for strategic nuclear arms control uncertain at best.
- ▶ National security implications of failing to extend, renegotiating, withdrawing from, or violating New START are increasingly destabilizing from a strategic stability perspective.
- ▶ The case for extending New START offers real deterrence, verification, and cost benefits that should be underscored.
- ▶ These arguments must be framed differently than in the past to resonate with current USG stakeholders.



Implications of 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) for New START

- ▶ Dec. 2017 National Security Strategy emphasizes “peace through strength” in a “new era of great power rivalries.”
- ▶ Russian nuclear weapons, not proliferating rogues and terrorists, are once again “the most significant existential threat” to the U.S.
- ▶ NPR heavily emphasizes deterrence and nuclear arsenal modernization over arms control and diplomacy.
- ▶ Arms control agreements must be “verifiable and enforceable.”
- ▶ Russian non-compliance with various arms control obligations makes further arms control progress “difficult to envision.”
- ▶ Word search of “extension” and “extended” in NPR:
 - 12 references to arsenal Life Extension Program
 - 15 references to extended deterrence
 - 1 reference to extending New START.



U.S.-Russian Arms Control Developments of Concern

- ▶ INF Treaty violations alleged by both sides (e.g., Russian production, possession, flight testing of banned ground-launched cruise missile).
- ▶ Ongoing Open Skies treaty violations remain an issue.
- ▶ Russia has suspended implementation of CFE Treaty.
- ▶ Alleged Russian use of prohibited novichok-type nerve agent on British soil would violate the Chemical Weapons Convention
- ▶ Russian support for Syria in U.N. Security Council and for Assad regime, despite Syria's use of chemical weapons, threatens the global norm against WMD use.
- ▶ Bellicose Putin public statements on new nuclear weapons development have heightened tensions.
- ▶ Russia-hostile arms control skeptics have ascended to senior U.S. national security positions.



Four Options for the Future of New START

- ▶ 1) Leave New START in place.
 - Pursue five-year extension
 - Announce no extension will be sought
 - Initiate “Next START” negotiations to get a “better deal”.
- ▶ 2) Seek to amend New START before expiry.
- ▶ 3) Withdraw from New START.
- ▶ 4) Suspend implementation or violate the Treaty without withdrawing.



Option 1: Leave New START in Place

- ▶ Most stabilizing option from strategic stability perspective.
- ▶ Several potential variants:
 - Pursue five-year extension as provided by the Treaty; may be unlikely under this Administration unless U.S.-Russian relationship changes.
 - Announce no extension will be sought. This would be destabilizing but could be reversed later, including under a new Administration post-2020.
 - Initiate negotiations on a bilateral or multilateral “Next START”; the latter would be a game-changer, but is highly unlikely.



New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers
Offensive Arms



BUREAU OF ARMS CONTROL, VERIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE
Fact Sheet
December 1, 2011

Option 2: Seek to Amend New START by 2021

- ▶ Likely goal would be to negotiate a “better deal.” For instance:
 - Amend set of treaty-limited items to capture hard-to-track items the Russians favor, like rail-mobile ICBMs.
 - Resurrect START II limits on MIRVed ICBMs not currently captured.
 - Tighten generous counting rules for heavy bombers exploited by Russia.
 - Strengthen robustness of verification regime.
 - Strengthen penalties for non-compliance.



Option 3: Withdraw from New START

- ▶ Both sides acknowledge the other to be in compliance; a rare bright spot in U.S.-Russian arms control.
- ▶ NPR says we will continue to comply; withdrawal would normally seem unlikely.
- ▶ However, likelihood of withdrawal has increased with appointment of New START skeptics to senior Administration positions.



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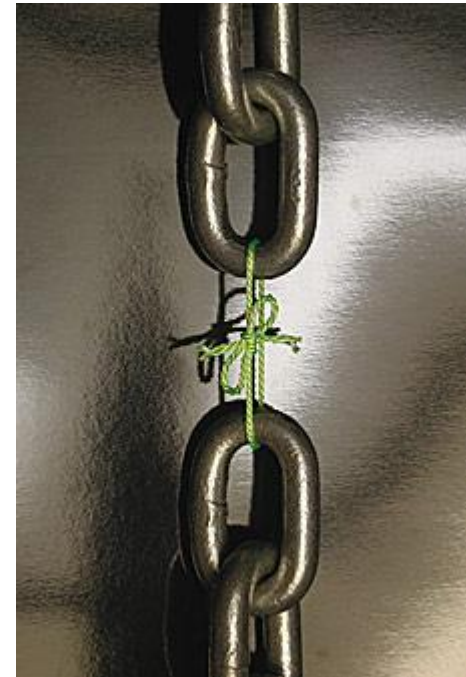


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Option 4: Suspend New START Implementation or Violate without Withdrawal

- ▶ U.S. could suspend implementation to pressure Russia to come back into compliance with INF Treaty; Russia could suspend implementation in response to sanctions or for many other reasons.
 - Status would be similar to Conventional Forces in Europe treaty, suspended since 2007.

- ▶ A party could deliberately violate the treaty for deterrence or messaging purposes. Certain Administration officials view formal international agreements ranging from the Paris Accord and Trans-Pacific Partnership to INF, New START and more with deep skepticism.
 - Such an action would be highly destabilizing



Three Likely Outcomes for New START

- ▶ U.S. and Russian brinksmanship (e.g., threatened treaty withdrawal) is followed by a transactional agreement to discuss extension in exchange for other concessions.
- ▶ U.S. may seek to renegotiate the treaty for a better deal (e.g., the NAFTA approach) with stronger verification, more flexibility for the U.S. stockpile, or to capture non-treaty-limited items (e.g., rail-mobile ICBMs.)
- ▶ Administration may plan for no extension and lay groundwork for stockpile growth post-2021 beyond New START limits.



**These approaches may be pursued intermittently
or in parallel.**

Given these Uncertainties, What Should Be Done?

- ▶ Time is ripe for vigorous public dialogue on why New START extension is a good deal for the U.S.
- ▶ However, the argument of “arms control for the sake of arms control” as a guidepost on the road to global zero is doomed to failure in the current political environment.
- ▶ Arguments in favor of New START extension should be cast in America-centric language and conveyed in layman’s terms through both traditional and non-traditional channels.



The Deterrence and Verification Case for Extending New START

- ▶ We have an opportunity and an obligation to protect the American people. Russian nuclear weapons pose an existential threat to American survival.
- ▶ New START prevents a nuclear arms race and minimizes any Russian incentive to attack—making America more secure.
- ▶ New START leaves the U.S. an ample nuclear arsenal sufficient to inflict an overwhelming response on any aggressor.
- ▶ New START's verification regime is extensive and Russia is complying. Through New START, we have gained much and sacrificed little.
- ▶ We can modernize the nuclear arsenal and comply with New START. It's not an either/or decision. It's a win-win.



The Cost/Benefit Case for New START Extension

- ▶ Extending New START is economically the smart thing to do. It offers maximum freedom to U.S. defense strategy for minimum cost.
- ▶ New START lets us focus U.S. dollars on modernizing the arsenal and maintaining the non-deployed stockpile as a “hedge” against future threats—all without violating the Treaty.
- ▶ New START constrains the Russians from behaviors that would require a costly U.S. response (like growing the stockpile.) We reap the economic benefits, making more money available for job creation, homeland security & other America-first imperatives.



Stockpile modernization, reinvesting in America’s conventional superiority, and New START extension are a winning combination. They work together to keep America safe.

Group Discussion

- ▶ What key issues in this analysis were not assessed?
- ▶ What key factors were assessed imperfectly?
- ▶ What are the next steps? What is the best path forward for making this case to arms control-skeptical USG senior stakeholders in the current political environment?
- ▶ Your questions, suggestions and comments are welcome!

