House Republican
CONFERENCE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: THE NEW START TREATY

When President Trump heads to the G20 summit in Japan at the end of June, world leaders are sure to discuss a number of pressing national security issues. Key among them: the New START Treaty, an arms reduction treaty between the United States and Russia that was forged under President Obama.

The treaty will expire on February 5, 2021 unless it is extended. President Trump has been critical of the treaty, describing it in February 2017 as "just another bad deal that the country made." His Administration has indicated that before we consider extending New START, we must first attempt to renegotiate and set more comprehensive limits on both the Russian and Chinese programs.

From the White House:

- The President has charged his national security team to think more broadly about arms control, both in terms of the countries and weapons systems involved.
- The President wants serious arms control that delivers real security to the American people and our allies. To achieve this, Russia and China must be brought to the table.
- The world has moved on from the Cold War and its bilateral arms control treaties that cover limited types of nuclear weapons and only certain ranges of adversary missiles.

What to Know:

The treaty limits *strategic* warheads and delivery systems to:

- 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and bombs
- 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy bombers
- 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBM and SLBM launchers and bombers

The treaty does not limit *non-strategic* (sometimes called tactical) nuclear weapons. When it comes to non-strategic weapons, Russia has "at least a 10:1 advantage" according to the Heritage Foundation.

What do 'strategic' and 'non-strategic' actually mean? These are artificial categories set out in the treaty. Weapons restricted by New START are labeled 'strategic,' while weapons known as 'non-strategic' fall outside New START's parameters. For example, a high-yield weapon on a *submarine-launched ballistic missile* would fall under the treaty; a high-yield weapon on a *sea-launched cruise missile* would not.

Notable Critiques:

- *Insufficient Scope: Arms Limits*
  - Since New START was signed in 2010, Russia has developed a range of weapons that fall outside its parameters.
    - Russia already possesses up to 2,000 non-strategic nuclear warheads and is continuing to expand and diversify its stockpile.
    - Russia's non-strategic systems, which include short and close range ballistic missiles, anti-ship missiles, and more, are not covered by the treaty.
  - Moscow is also actively developing new and improved strategic weapons.
  - Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) director Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley said last week that many of Russia's new delivery systems "are difficult to manage under current arms control agreements."

- *Insufficient Scope: Participants*
  - The treaty only binds Russia and America — not China, which has been rapidly modernizing its nuclear arsenal.
    - China will likely at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile in the next decade, according to DIA director Ashley, who added: "Last year, China launched more ballistic missiles for testing and training than the rest of the world combined."

- *Arms control experts have criticized the treaty's verification regime, especially when it comes to counting warheads.*
  - "The current lack of verifiable Russian New START violations likely has to do with limitations in the treaty's verification provisions, not with a fundamental change in Russia's behavior. Russia has violated almost all arms control agreements it has ever signed," reads a recent report from the Heritage Foundation.