

Nuclear Arsenal Cut Lower Than New START Requires

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WASHINGTON — Russia has already cut its nuclear arsenal below the level required in an arms control treaty signed with the United States last year, according to new figures from the U.S. State Department.

Russia has 1,537 deployed strategic nuclear warheads, just under the 1,550 ceiling it is obliged to reach by 2018 under the New START nuclear arms reduction pact, while the United States has 1,800, according to a State Department fact sheet released Wednesday.

The figures are accurate as of Feb. 5, 2011, and drawn from an exchange of data required under the treaty, which was signed April 8, 2010, and entered into force on March 22, 2011.

Under the treaty, each side agreed to reduce its deployed nuclear warheads to no more than 1,550 within seven years of the treaty's entry into force.

Each also agreed to limit its intercontinental ballistic missile launchers, submarine ballistic missile launchers and heavy bombers to no more than 800, whether deployed or not.

The United States has 1,124 of these and Russia 865, according to the State Department figures.

Finally, each committed to deploy no more than 700 intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine ballistic missiles or heavy bombers. As of Feb. 5, the United States had 882 of these and Russia 521.

Tom Collina, research director of the nonpartisan Arms Control Association, a nonpartisan Washington-based group that seeks to promote arms control, welcomed Russia's cuts and said the United States should speed up its reductions.

"New START is working," he wrote in a blog post, saying Russia was previously estimated to have 2,000 deployed warheads.

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