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Russian Ex-Minister Given U.S. Award for Promoting Nuclear Security

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Former Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov.

A former Russian foreign minister has been awarded a prestigious U.S. award for promoting nuclear security, amid concerns that Russia's recent standoff with the West could escalate into a Cold-War style nuclear standoff.

Igor Ivanov on Monday accepted the Nunn-Lugar Award for Promoting Nuclear Security at the Carnegie Endowment Nuclear Policy Conference in Washington, the TASS news agency reported.

The award is named after two former U.S. senators, Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, who played a crucial role in the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program to dismantle weapons of mass destruction in former Soviet Union countries.

Ivanov shared the award with Lord Desmond Browne, a former British defense secretary.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ivanov said Russian-U.S. diplomacy had hit a low point over

the Ukraine crisis and advocated the revival of constructive dialogue between the two parties.

"The dialogue between nuclear powers in general and between Russia and the U.S. in particular is currently broken," Ivanov, who is currently chairman of the Russian International Affairs Council, was cited as saying by TASS.

Ivanov served as foreign minister from 1998 to 2004 and secretary of the United Nations Security Council from 2004 to 2007 and was known for actively promoting cooperation between Moscow and Washington during his term.

But Russia's relations with the West have notably worsened since its annexation of Crimea last March, and the resulting standoff has seen both sides engage in mutual hostility and fingerpointing.

Mikhail Ulyanov, who heads a Russian Foreign Ministry department for non-proliferation and arms control, suggested earlier this month that further nuclear dismantlement could be problematic, given U.S. violations of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty.

NATO, meanwhile, accused Russia of stepping up its nuclear exercises last month.

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