

Russia Riled by Trump's 'Disturbing' Nuclear Weapons Comments

Moscow doesn't like the taste of its own nuclear saber-rattling medicine.

By [Matthew Bodner](#)

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A U.S. Minuteman ICBM silo. **U.S. National Parks Service**

Russia is “categorically opposed” to the termination of the New START nuclear arms control treaty, the head of the Federation Council’s defense committee, Viktor Ozerov, said on Feb. 24.

Russia will push for an extension of the treaty, Ozerov said adding that it was “fundamental to global security” the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Ozerov’s remarks were prompted by a Feb. 23 interview with U.S. president Donald Trump in

which he slammed the New START treaty as a “bad deal” signed by the previous administration.

"We are going to start making good deals," Trump said.

Trump's specific critique of the New START treaty is that it is “one-sided.”

Ozerov was echoed by Federation Council member Konstantin Kosachev, head of the foreign affairs committee who said, “This is, perhaps, the most disturbing statement yet of Trump's on the topic of relations with Russia.”

Kosachev urged for dialogue with the U.S. on the future of New START be launched as soon as possible.

Alexei Pushkov, a member of the defense committee, was more pointed in his critique. Pushkov suggested on Twitter that Obama and George Soros are busy leading a coup by the Democrats against Trump in Washington. "[Trump] should be thinking about that, and not New START."

Embed:

Обвинения Обамы/Сороса в перевороте на Украине не случайны: теперь демократы намерены свергнуть Трампа. Ему бы об этом думать, а не об СНВ-3

— Алексей Пушков (@Alexey_Pushkov) [February 24, 2017](#)

A signature accomplishment of the Obama-era reset with Russia, the treaty stipulates that both Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals are capped at 1,550 warheads deployed by Feb. 05, 2018.

It also limits launch vehicles and delivery systems to 700 deployed missiles and bombers and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers.

The latest New START accounting was released by the State Department's arms control bureau on Jan. 1. It showed Russia has 1796 warheads deployed, while the U.S. is already under the cap with 1367 warheads.

The U.S. leads, however, with 681 deployed missiles and bombers and 848 launchers. Russia is behind with 508 and 847, respectively.

Analysts say that the discrepancy in Russia's warhead count has more to do with New START accounting than anything else.

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In his recent comments, Trump appeared to be less concerned with the question of equality under New START than with the concept of arms control in general.

He said the U.S. should have larger nuclear arsenals than anyone else, "until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes."

Ozerov said Trump's attitude toward New START and nuclear weapons would set a bad example for states aspiring to join the nuclear club — especially North Korea.

The lawmaker suggested extending New START, which will otherwise expire Feb. 05, 2021, should be on the agenda for an eventual summit between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The agenda of the possible high-level talks between Russia and the United States is expanding with each of Trump's statement. The earlier these issues are discussed at a personal eye-to-eye meeting, the better," Ozerov said.

Trump also called the alleged Russian violation of another agreement, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), "a big deal." Russia's Foreign Ministry has branded reports of the violations "fake news."

Trump said he intends to bring INF violations up with Putin "if and when we meet."

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