

Gorbachev Urges Biden to Improve Relations With Russia, Extend Key Nuclear Pact

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Mikhail Gorbachev **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, has urged Joe Biden's administration to improve U.S.-Russia ties and extend a key nuclear pact ahead of the U.S. President-elect's inauguration.

"The current condition of relations between Russia and the United States is of great concern," Gorbachev said in an interview with the state-run TASS news agency [published](#) Wednesday, the day Biden will be sworn in as president.

"But this also means that something has to be done about it in order to normalize relations," he said. "We cannot fence ourselves off from each other."

Former U.S. President Barack Obama and then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed the New START, also called START-3, in 2010. Biden has pledged to extend the treaty, which

limits the number of nuclear warheads between the two powers, before it expires on Feb. 5.

“It is necessary to extend the START-3 and it is possible, especially since Biden advocated for it during his election campaign,” Gorbachev said.

As Vice President, Biden was one of the key architects of the Obama administration’s attempted “reset” of U.S.-Russia relations. Gorbachev said he remembered discussing the need to continue the nuclear disarmament process with Biden in 2009.

“The treaty was very important, not so much in terms of the scale of reductions, but in terms of stability and control. Its inspections, notifications and consultation mechanisms are very important; they cannot be breached,” Gorbachev said.

Medvedev himself has called Biden’s pledge to extend the treaty “optimistic” in an op-ed [published](#) by TASS last week. The New START’s extension is just one item in a long list of pending issues on the U.S.-Russia political agenda, and relations between the two countries have plummeted to post-Cold War lows in recent years.

Gorbachev said he felt optimistic toward the future of U.S.-Russia ties, pointing toward the Cold War, another difficult time in the countries’ relations. As the last Soviet leader, he played a pivotal role in ending the Cold War, reaching agreements with U.S. President Ronald Reagan on denuclearization and a number of other issues.

“At the Geneva summit, we agreed to establish bilateral working groups on all issues: nuclear disarmament, bilateral relations, humanitarian cooperation and regional issues. There were many issues — no less than now,” Gorbachev said.

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