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# Russia Rejects U.S. Claim of New START Violations

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A Yars mobile missile system is tested at the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in Russia's far north. **Russian Defense Ministry / AP / TASS**

Russia remains committed to its last remaining nuclear arms control pact with the United States despite claims that it is failing to comply with the treaty, Moscow's Ambassador to Washington said Wednesday as fears of nuclear confrontation loom over the war in Ukraine.

The U.S. State Department on Tuesday accused Russia of not complying with New START by suspending inspections and canceling talks.

It did not accuse its Cold War rival of expanding the number of nuclear warheads beyond agreed limits.

Responding to the accusations, Ambassador Anatoly Antonov instead blamed Washington for the deterioration of New START, claiming Moscow was responding to "the hybrid war unleashed by the West against our country."

“We have warned that arms control cannot be isolated from geopolitical realities,” the Russian diplomat said in comments published on the Russian Embassy’s Facebook page.

At the same time, Antonov said “we intend to continue observing the central limits of the Treaty.”

Later Wednesday, the Kremlin said it believes “that the continuation of this treaty is very important.”

“On the other hand, we see that the United States has actually destroyed the legal framework in the field of arms control and security,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

**Related article**: U.S. Extends New START Nuclear Treaty With Russia as Rifts Rise

New START, the only remaining arms reduction treaty between the world’s two largest nuclear powers, establishes a limit on both countries’ strategic nuclear arsenals. It will remain in force until 2026, at which point it will be up for another extension.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said last week that talks on New START had been effectively “frozen” even before Moscow sent its forces into Ukraine.

He blamed Washington’s refusal in late 2021 to accept Russia’s demands for security guarantees — which included clauses to halt military cooperation with former Soviet countries and permanently block Ukraine from NATO membership.

“We can say that as a result of Washington’s actions, arms control has become a hostage to the overall deep degradation of our bilateral relations,” Ryabkov told the Kommersant business daily.

Diplomacy between the two powers has ground to a bare minimum over the past year as the U.S. leads a drive to punish Russia economically for its war against Ukraine and arm Kyiv with billions of dollars in weapons.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has issued thinly veiled threats to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine, reviving Cold War-era fears of an apocalyptic war.

Russia indefinitely postponed talks under New START that had been due to start on Nov. 29 in Cairo, accusing the United States of "toxicity and animosity."

*AFP contributed reporting.*

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