

Arms Reduction Treaty:

FATALLY *flawed*

Since the end of the Cold War, both the US and Russia have sought to lessen their dangerous and large nuclear arsenals. The United States has over 10,500 nuclear weapons - Russia is estimated to have 18,000.

While both countries have made progress toward disarmament, the most recent arms control treaty - called the Moscow Treaty - signed by Presidents Bush and Putin, is fatally flawed. The most glaring shortfall: it does not obligate either country to dismantle a single weapon.

This treaty represents a lost opportunity for the two countries to increase global security.

The Nuclear Freezer?

The Moscow Treaty calls for reductions in ready-to-use nuclear weapons. By December 31, 2012, there should be no more than 2,200 of these weapons attached to delivery systems in the US or Russia - still more than enough to destroy the world. But rather than destroy the remaining weapons, the treaty allows them to be stored away for the future.

The warehousing of nuclear weapons, particularly in Russia, represents a grave security risk. On account of economic and political conditions, many Russian warheads are already vulnerable to theft and illegal sales. By displacing thousands more of these warheads, without a concurrent promise to destroy them, we've only increased the likelihood of their winding up in the wrong hands.

The Moscow Treaty also allows the US and Russia to retain all nuclear delivery systems including strategic bombers, submarine-launched missiles, and land-based intercontinental missiles. Come 2012, Russians and Americans can simply re-attach their stored warheads and redeploy the kind of dangerous, over-the-top nuclear arsenals that predominate today.

Legal for a Day

Unfortunately, the Moscow Treaty provides no schedule or framework for compliance. There are no quotas to meet and no cross-country inspections to verify that reductions have been made. The US and Russia are accountable for nothing and to nobody until December 31, 2012. And if they do not adequately reduce their weapons by that time? Not a problem. The treaty expires the same day. In other words, "at 12 am on December 31, the treaty is no longer in force, but this is precisely the moment when the 2,200 warhead limitation is slated to take effect. (Natural Resources Defense Council 2002)."

Peace Action 
EDUCATION FUND

1819 H Street NW Suite 425 • Washington DC 20006 • ph 202.862.9740 • fax 202.862.9762

Radical Unilateralism

The President and his administration have shown a blatant disregard for treaties and international law. Here are just a few treaties that the administration's "radical unilateralism" has junked or weakened:

Nuclear Non-Proliferation

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is often cited as the cornerstone of disarmament diplomacy. The most important clause, Article VI, commits nuclear countries to disarmament. President Bush's plan to develop new nuclear weapons threatens to violate this treaty.

Anti-Ballistic Missile

*The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, in prohibiting the development of missile shields in Russia and the United States, helped to slow the arms race. President Bush formally **withdrew** the United States from the treaty.*

Comprehensive Test Ban

*In 1996, the United States was among the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which sought to end nuclear testing around the world. President Bush opposes the treaty and has **refused** to send it to the Senate for ratification.*

peace-action.org

FATALLY *flawed*

Glaring Omissions

The Moscow Treaty takes a dangerous step backward from an agreement previously negotiated by President George Bush Sr. It allows Russia to deploy multiple warhead missiles, called SS-18s, the most dangerous weapons in Russia's arsenal.

In addition, the treaty does not address the fact that both the US and Russia have weapons still on "hair-trigger alert" - leaders have mere minutes to decide whether to launch an attack. A false alarm or computer glitch could result in accidental nuclear war. "De-alerting" or taking these weapons off high alert status is an important step toward reducing the nuclear danger.

"Whatever the treaty's immediate political value to Presidents Putin and Bush, as a legally binding agreement it is a sham, a mere "memorandum of conversation" masquerading as a treaty. And that raises the question of whether the Senate can or should ratify the treaty in its present form, without the addition of significant binding conditions to cure the most serious defects."

Excerpt from a presentation before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by Christopher E. Paine, member of the Los Alamos Study Group.

Stopping S.T.A.R.T

Unfortunately, this new and flawed treaty takes the place of much stronger agreements. These agreements, called the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaties, began in 1991 and resulted in three successive disarmament agreements, the first of which - START I - has already entered into force. This treaty process reduced the number of ready-to-use warheads, eliminated the weapons that deliver them to their targets, and ultimately destroyed the warheads themselves. It also offered a framework for compliance. Under START I, for example, Russian officials could monitor US facilities, and US officials could monitor Russian facilities in order to verify that treaty provisions were met.

Take Action

Write a letter to your Senators and urge them to increase global security by strengthening the Moscow Treaty. You can use our sample below.

Sample Letter

Dear Senator _____,

I urge you to strengthen the Moscow Treaty to include measures for *real* nuclear weapons reductions. Please direct the President to reduce operational nuclear weapons to 1,700 within 5 years and to dismantle inactive stockpiles. I urge you also to require the President to get the Senate's consent before being allowed to withdraw from the Moscow Treaty.

These measures will help to safeguard the world from the threat of nuclear weapons.

Sincerely, (Your name)

Write to Your Senators at:

The Honorable Senator _____
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Local Contact: