

Protecting nuclear arms control is a global imperative

GROUP STATEMENT



The world badly needs more nuclear arms control, not less.

As security policy leaders from 50 countries in Europe, North America, Asia and the Pacific, we call on the leaders of Russia, the United States, China, France, and the United Kingdom to ensure that nuclear arms control will not be made yet another victim of geopolitical competition.

These five leaders, in January last year, declared the reduction of strategic risks and the avoidance of war between nuclear-weapon states to be their foremost responsibilities and that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought. In November 2022, G20 leaders (including the United States, Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, and India) collectively agreed that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible.

Yet United States-Russia strategic stability talks are in limbo and the New START treaty, which has played an indispensable role in ensuring reciprocal security, is now in question. As the only existing nuclear arms control agreement between the United States and Russia, the world's two largest nuclear-armed countries, the treaty's collapse or expiration without a replacement would threaten a destabilising arms race.

Failure to agree on a new nuclear arms control framework to replace New START before it expires in February 2026 would also make it more difficult to bring China, France and the United Kingdom into multilateral arms control, as all three are not ready to consider limits on their nuclear arsenals until the United States and Russia bring down their nuclear stockpiles.

Worsening great power competition has made it even more difficult to advance nuclear arms control and risk reduction more generally – for example, within the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Failure to uphold obligations under that treaty weakens our national and collective security and fails the test of statesmanship.

We have many different views on the rights and wrongs of current geopolitical competition. But we all agree that it is long past time to start prioritising nuclear arms control and taking unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral actions.

We call on the P5 nuclear weapons states to take steps to begin strategic stability talks at a variety of levels and to resume strategic risk reduction talks in the P5 format. We call on Russia and the United States to compartmentalise nuclear arms control by

- Confirming that they will not exceed the New START limits on deployed nuclear forces, which thus far have not been violated.
- Agreeing to remove the obstacles to full implementation of their New START obligations and resuming the work of the Bilateral Consultative Commission.
- Committing to pursuing good faith negotiations on a successor framework for New START before its expiration in 2026.

We call on all signatory and other holdout states of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to reaffirm their commitments not to test nuclear weapons and also to make concerted efforts towards entry into force of the Treaty.

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Signed,

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