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New START Expires with No Sign of Replacement Will Western Nations Find the Moral Fitness To Accept Survival?

Feb. 5, 2026 —On Thursday, Feb. 5, the only remaining agreement limiting the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia expired. The expiration of the New START Treaty “marks a grave moment for international peace and security,” said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres—a reaction expressed by many from around the world, and made even more palpable given the growing uncertainty and instability around the world. In the lead-up to the treaty’s expiration, Russian President Vladimir Putin had extended an open hand, proposing to the U.S. last September to extend it for one year while a new treaty was being negotiated. However, no response was ever given, leading Russia to conclude that “our ideas have been deliberately left unanswered,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Feb. 4.

On Thursday, Axios released a report claiming that U.S. and Russian negotiators in Abu Dhabi were, in fact, discussing the extension of the terms of the START Treaty, with both sides reportedly in agreement that it should continue. Yet within hours, U.S. President Donald Trump appeared to torpedo the report, writing on Truth Social: “Rather than extend ‘NEW START’ (A badly negotiated deal by the United States that, aside from everything else, is being grossly violated), we should have our Nuclear Experts work on a new, improved, and modernized Treaty that can last long into the future.”

Whether or not Trump has also decided to send B-2 bombers to take out the negotiators is unconfirmed. But you can be sure that the Iranian negotiating team that is scheduled to meet with a U.S. delegation in Oman on Friday Feb. 6 are asking themselves exactly that question.

This whole charade underscores the crisis facing the world: The imperial hubris infecting the ruling establishment, which assumes it deserves unfettered control over the world, is now getting in the way of the types of rational and mutually respectful relations that the world as a whole requires in order to exist. Said another way: The basis for trust is more than lacking. Trump did not invent this degeneracy—as can be seen by the widespread involvement in the lurid activities of Jeffrey Epstein—but has certainly embraced it.

In Europe, the situation is scarcely better, if not even worse. French President Emmanuel Macron has sent an envoy to meet with a Kremlin diplomat in Moscow. While Macron’s intentions are anything but honorable, this welcome change will now force Germany’s Friedrich Merz and Italy’s Giorgia Meloni to confront that same uncomfortable question, of whether to talk genuinely with their largest neighbor which up until now they have been

content to bludgeon with saber-rattling and lectures. Macron stated on Feb. 3 that a reopening of relations between France and Russia is being prepared at a “technical level” by Bonne, without further elaboration.

In contrast to this, a clear voice of leadership shone through in the Feb. 5 press conference hosted by independent presidential candidate Diane Sare, titled “For a New New START.” Sare referenced the news that there may be an “informal” extension of the treaty, saying “this is far from adequate.” She then quoted from Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s 1945 comments aboard the USS Missouri when he received the Japanese surrender, to drive home the historic magnitude of today’s crisis:

“A new era is upon us. Even the lesson of Victory itself brings with it profound concern, both for our future security and the survival of civilization. The destructiveness of the War potential, through progressive advances in scientific discovery, has in fact now reached a point which revises the traditional concept of War. . . . Military alliances, balance of power, Leagues of Nations all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we do not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological, and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.”

This is why any proposal to extend New START for a few months is “better than nothing,” Sare said, but it is not adequate, given the current strategic crisis. Sare offered a three-part policy solution: 1) The United States must declare a “no first use” of nuclear weapons doctrine, and require that every nuclear weapons-armed nation, including emphatically Israel, must join. 2) A new security and economic development architecture must be formed, including a reform of the UN Security Council to reflect the growing influence of the nations of the Global South. 3) Two major endeavors that would greatly benefit the Russian and the American people and mankind as a whole: the Bering Strait Tunnel linking Alaska to Siberia and the 2011 Russian proposal to establish a joint asteroid-defense program.

This discussion, fit for the true citizenry of a republic, will be continued Friday, Feb. 6 at the weekly meeting of the International Peace Coalition. Join the mobilization.

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