

# The US' Nuclear START Ultimatum to Russia. New Nuclear Arms Race? Provoking the Unthinkable?

There is nothing more dangerous for global stability than an all-out nuclear arms race between the US and Russia...

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*The previously unthinkable scenario of the US and Russia returning to nuclear brinkmanship with one another is once again on the cards after America's START ultimatum to the Eurasian Great Power.*

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## What Could Be Worse Than The Cuban Missile Crisis?

The Cuban Missile Crisis is universally considered to have been the most dangerous moment in the history of mankind after it prompted the US and Russia to engage in nuclear brinkmanship with one another. The end of the Old Cold War was thought by many to have made the return to such a dark scenario an utter impossibility, but the previously thinkable might be about to repeat itself very soon following the US' START ultimatum to Russia earlier this week. That acronym refers to the latest Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty which limited the number of nuclear warheads on each side and restricted some of their delivery systems. It was agreed to by Presidents Obama and Medvedev but expires early next year. Failing to renew the agreement would unquestionably spark an uncontrollable nuclear and other arms race between these Great Powers and therefore greatly destabilize the world. Unfortunately, this might be [inevitable](#).

## The American Ultimatum To Russia

US Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control **Marshall Billingslea** told the Russian daily Kommersant on Sunday that the New START might be extended for less than five years through a memorandum of intent but [only on the condition](#) that China joins the deal and NATO doesn't scale back any of its nuclear weapons from Europe during this period like Moscow requested. Russia obviously can't compel China to do anything so the US is clearly trying to drive a wedge between the two by [pressuring Moscow to lean on Beijing](#) in this manner, which would [further complicate their relations](#) if it was even attempted. Secondly, the NATO buildup in Europe is alarming to Russia since it poses a direct threat to its national security interests. Agreeing to formalize the recent status quo which violates the Russia-NATO Founding Act and is greatly shaped by the US' recent withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty would set a disturbing precedent too.

## Russia's Hypersonic Missiles To The Rescue

For all intents and purposes, the US isn't negotiating in good faith but decided to present Russia with an ultimatum that it knew it would refuse, and not only that, but is powerless to comply with even if it wanted to considering its inability to force China to join the New START. It's for this reason that Russian UN **Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia** told [Sputnik](#) on Monday that his country "will find efficient ways to protect ourselves" if the New START isn't extended. He was likely referring to [Russia's hypersonic missile achievements](#) of the past few years that President Putin compared to the scale of the USSR's nuclear project just last week according to [TASS](#). The outlet also reported him as saying that

"We had to create these weapons in response to the US deploying strategic missile defense system, which in the future would be able to actually neutralize, nullify our entire nuclear potential."

### **Who Stole Whose Hypersonic Missile Secrets?**

Around the same time as the Russian leader's statement, Trump [accused](#) his country of stealing hypersonic missile technology from the US during the Obama era, though one of the scientists involved in this project [refuted](#) him by pointing out that such experiments "began in the Soviet times, when Obama was still a teenager." It should also be pointed out that a Russian scientist was [arrested](#) in summer 2018 on suspicion of passing off related secrets to what many believe was the American intelligence services. Seeing as how President Putin publicly unveiled this technology earlier that spring, the sequence of events suggests that the US truly is behind Russia in this respect and is struggling to catch up, ergo the spy games. Had Russian really stolen this technology like Trump claimed, then the US wouldn't need to steal it back from Russia in order to win the hypersonic missile race since it would have presumably still been in possession of these same secrets.

### **The Poor Sport Wants To Spoil Strategic Stability Because It Lost**

The US simply cannot accept that Russia -which the American government and its surrogates routinely allege is backwards, dysfunctional, and on the brink of bankruptcy — beat it in developing hypersonic missiles, which it did in order to protect its nuclear potential after Bush withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and set the trajectory for the contemporary era of nuclear competition between Great Powers. Russia had to ensure that its second-strike capability wasn't neutralized by the US' global missile defense plans, hence its interest in accelerating development of hypersonic missiles for piercing through those systems. In other words, Russia foiled the US' multibillion-dollar plans to impose its nuclear hegemony upon the world, which explains the furious response of the American government to President Putin's spring 2018 announcement. Instead of accepting the return of strategic parity, however, the US wants to provoke a nuclear arms race with Russia.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

There is nothing more dangerous for global stability than an all-out nuclear arms race between the US and Russia, which will in turn naturally push all the other nuclear-armed states to increase their own arsenals due to the "security dilemma" that this provokes. The US is behaving very irresponsibly in imposing an ultimatum on Russia in exchange for agreeing to the limited extension of the New START. Whether he realizes it or not, Trump is putting the world back on the path of repeating the Cuban Missile Crisis in the worst-case scenario since it might only be a matter of time before the nuclear competition between the

US and Russia spirals out of control once again. The whole reason why the New START and its predecessor pacts were inked was to make that an impossibility, but it's now once again on the forefront of decision makers' minds. Unless Trump or perhaps even Biden has a change of heart (neither of which is likely), then the world will be in for very rough times.

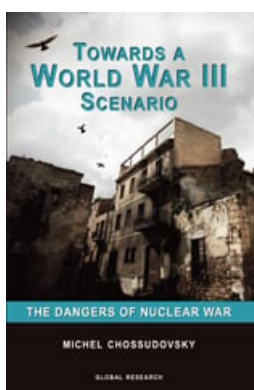
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**Andrew Korybko** is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to *Global Research*.

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*-Ellen Brown, author of ‘Web of Debt’ and president of the Public Banking Institute*



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