



NUCLEAR AGE PEACE FOUNDATION

Committed to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

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Open Letter to Presidents Obama and Medvedev: Prevent Nuclear War

Washington, DC / Moscow — February 5, 2012 marks the first anniversary of the entry into force of the New START agreement between the United States and Russia, which lowers the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles held by each country. A new open letter sent today to Presidents Obama and Medvedev, signed by major nongovernmental organizations and prominent individuals from around the world, expresses concerns that this not be the last anniversary of the treaty.

The letter includes the signatures of four Nobel Prize-winning individuals and one Nobel Prize-winning organization.

While U.S. and world media focus their attention on the potential for development of nuclear weapons in Iran, conflicts over U.S. and NATO deployment of missile defenses in Europe have quietly been escalating without public attention. This letter addresses the increasingly sharp divisions and distrust between the United States and Russia over U.S. and NATO deployment of missile defenses in Europe and the hardening of positions on both sides. This could lead to the targeting of missile defense sites by Russians and the abrogation of the New START agreement.

Warning of the potential consequences of continued conflict over this issue, the open letter states, “A Russian withdrawal from New START would likely precipitate a fully-renewed nuclear arms race and thus completely reverse movement toward a world without nuclear weapons. Many of the signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) would also regard the collapse of the New START process as an explicit violation of the NPT; this could lead to the collapse of the NPT and extensive nuclear proliferation.”

Adding to the threats posed by this situation, the open letter emphasizes that “both the U.S. and Russia still maintain strategic war plans that include large nuclear strike options, with hundreds of preplanned targets that clearly include cities in each other’s nation. Both nations keep a total of at least 1,700 strategic nuclear weapons mounted on launch-ready ballistic missiles, which can carry out these strike options with only a few minutes’ warning.”

The open letter is being released just weeks after the highly respected Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has moved the hands of its ‘doomsday clock’ from six to five minutes to midnight. Signatories of this open letter demand “that differences of opinion over missile defense must not be allowed to de-rail progress to zero nuclear weapons, or worse, to put that progress into reverse and instead reinstate Cold War security postures.”

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation was founded in 1982 to initiate and support worldwide efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, to strengthen international law and institutions, and to inspire and empower

a new generation of peace leaders. The Foundation is comprised of individuals and organizations worldwide who realize the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age. The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan international education and advocacy organization. It has consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is recognized by the UN as a Peace Messenger Organization. For more information, call 805.965.3443.

NOTE TO EDITORS: The open letter, with all signatories, is available to view online at www.wagingpeace.org/goto/nato.

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