

## **WHY DO WE NEED A NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTION TREATY WITH RUSSIA?**

Two decades after the end of the Cold War, the United States and Russia still maintain thousands of nuclear warheads aimed at each other, many of them ready to be launched on a few minutes notice, and each country keeps thousands more in reserve. In today's world these enormous arsenals are a source of danger, not security. It is time for a new agreement to continue and expand the START treaty on nuclear arms reduction.

**The danger of nuclear proliferation:** The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was a bargain under which (1) states which did not yet have nuclear weapons agreed not to acquire them and (2) in exchange the nuclear powers, including the US and Russia, agreed to reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons, and to negotiate in good faith toward a goal of eventual nuclear disarmament. Lack of progress by the nuclear powers in keeping these promises is placing a severe strain on the whole nonproliferation system, and gives other countries a motive to pursue their own nuclear options. Senator Lugar (R-IN) recently stated that "failure to renew START will be seen worldwide as weakening the international nonproliferation regime and a further sign to many foreign leaders and experts that US nonproliferation policy is adrift."

**The danger of nuclear terrorism:** Terrorist groups like Al Qaeda have proclaimed their desire to stage a "Hiroshima on American soil", and have made numerous attempts to buy or steal nuclear weapons or weapons-usable material. Maintaining the enormous arsenals left over from the Cold War simply puts more nuclear material at risk of theft or diversion.

**The danger of accidental war:** Several times already the world has come within a few minutes of thermonuclear war by mistake or miscalculation, and one of those occasions occurred several years after the Cold War ended. There is no rational or moral justification for continuing to subject the planet to this kind of danger. In reducing the danger of nuclear war, as Senator McCain (R-AZ) has stated, "the United States can- and indeed, must- show the kind of leadership the world expects from us."

**The need to reduce the nuclear danger is too urgent to be indefinitely postponed,** yet recent news reports indicate that the Senate might fail to vote on an arms control treaty in 2010 because of the press of other business. We should insist that the Senate consider any arms reduction agreement this year.

### **2010 Review of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty And Report to the United Nations**

Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup> – Riverside Church – International Conference begins (evening)  
Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup> – Riverside Church – International Conference continues (all day)  
Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Place to be announced – Interfaith Convocation (late morning)  
Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Near Times Square – Rally (2:00 p.m.) followed by March to the UN  
– United Nations – Peace Festival (all day)

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