



## Putin and Biden confirm extension of New START treaty

In phone call, presidents agree to finalize plans to continue nuclear accord due to expire on February 5.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden agreed Tuesday to extend the New START nuclear nonproliferation treaty, which is due to expire next month, according to Kremlin and White House summaries of a phone call between the leaders.

“They discussed both countries’ willingness to extend New START for five years, agreeing to have their teams work urgently to complete the extension by February 5,” the White House said.

The Kremlin in its summary said, “The Presidents expressed satisfaction in connection with the exchange of diplomatic notes carried out today on reaching an agreement on the extension of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms. In the coming days, the parties will complete all the necessary procedures to ensure the further functioning of this important international legal mechanism for the mutual limitation of nuclear missile arsenals.”

Formally called the “New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty,” the agreement limits Washington and Moscow’s deployed nuclear weapons to 1,550 each. It was signed in 2010, entered force on February 5, 2011 and was set to expire on its 10th anniversary.

New START is the last remaining nonproliferation agreement between the former Cold War superpower rivals, after another key nuclear accord, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, expired in August 2019.

According to the Kremlin, Putin used his first call with Biden to urged improved ties. “He noted that the normalization of relations between Russia and the United States would meet the interests of both countries and — taking into account their special responsibility for maintaining security and stability in the world — of the entire international community,” the Kremlin said.

The Kremlin said the presidents also discussed the coronavirus pandemic, the Open Skies Treaty and the Iran nuclear deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as well as the conflict in Ukraine and Putin’s call for a summit meeting of permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

The White House said Biden also confronted Putin on the issues of election interference and of the jailing of the Russian opposition leader, Alexei Navalny.