

# Threatening Russia with Nuclear War

## U.S. Can Circumvent START Nuclear Restrictions In Collusion With Britain

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, March 10, 2010

[Nezavisimaya Gazeta](#) 10 March 2010

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

Russian experts consider the new Russia-U.S. strategic arms reduction treaty to replace START to be a bilateral agreement. However, there is a way for Washington to circumvent strategic offensive arms ceilings with London's help.

Under the December 1962 Nassau Agreement, negotiated by U.S. President John F. Kennedy and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, Washington was to provide London with a supply of nuclear-capable Polaris missiles (under the terms of the Polaris Sales Agreement), in return for which Britain was to lease the Americans a nuclear submarine base in Scotland.

Alexei Fenenko, a leading researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of International Security Studies, writes that a revamped Nassau Agreement remains in force today.

Four British-made Vanguard-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines forming the mainstay of Great Britain's strategic nuclear forces and wielding U.S.-made Trident-II missiles will be automatically involved in a hypothetical conflict together with U.S. submarines, the analyst writes.

U.S. involvement in modernizing British strategic nuclear forces allows Washington to circumvent the new arms reduction agreement. First, the United States and the United Kingdom can jointly develop new types of nuclear weapons. In May 2005, Britain's Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Aldermaston, announced work to develop new-generation warheads for Trident-II missiles.

Although the United States may promise Russia not to upgrade warheads being removed from Trident-II missiles, nothing can prevent it from modernizing them jointly with Britain, the analyst writes.

Second, U.S.-British cooperation makes it possible to draft a new program of nuclear tests. In 1992, Washington announced a nuclear-test moratorium but did not ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). London, which ratified the CTBT in 1998, did not announce a nuclear-test moratorium.

The CTBT did not enter into force, while nuclear tests are only prevented by national moratoriums. Technically speaking, nothing can stop London from resuming its nuclear-test program. Moreover, Washington can join the program, without violating the moratorium, the analyst writes.

Third, Britain, which is not a party to the 1987 Soviet-U.S. Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, can manufacture shorter-range and medium-range missiles, as well as ground-based cruise missiles. Washington and London can launch joint projects in this sphere under the pretext of modernizing the British-French Storm Shadow air-launched cruise missiles.

Unlike their U.S. equivalents, British nuclear-tipped missiles and other delivery vehicles have a shorter approach time and can therefore reach European Russia more quickly. The United States may continue modernizing its nuclear submarines and ballistic missiles jointly with Great Britain. And the most important thing: even if Washington agrees to stipulate missile-defense ceilings in the new arms reduction agreement, it can still develop such systems under joint U.S.-British projects.

Russia considers all these trends to be extremely unfavorable. Consequently, the barely noticeable British factor plays a highly important role in the strategic balance, the analyst writes in conclusion.

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