

April 24, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Throughout your distinguished career of public service, you have worked to address the unique dangers nuclear weapons pose to America and the world. We are grateful to you and your national security team for your steadfast leadership through this period of heightened nuclear danger caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Your continued engagement on managing the nuclear threat is needed now more than ever.

Russia's steady stream of irresponsible nuclear threats and behavior, culminating in the recent announcement that Russia would suspend elements of its implementation of the 2010 New START Treaty, is deeply troubling. President Putin's actions have increased the risk of misunderstanding, miscommunication, and escalation between Russia and NATO, and ultimately, of nuclear use.

We are concerned that your administration's recent decision to suspend U.S. provision of the semi-annual data exchange required under the Treaty compounds the risk of misperception and misunderstanding. It also undermines the long-standing U.S. goals of (1) stabilizing the nuclear relationships with Russia and China and (2) modeling the responsible norm and practice of nuclear transparency.

We understand the administration is considering whether to also suspend some or all of the confidential, near-daily notifications the parties are required to provide each other regarding the status and movements of treaty-limited items. We urge you to refrain from replicating Russia's decision to suspend elements of its implementation of the Treaty and to continue to provide these data notifications to Russia. In addition, the United States should reinforce the importance of the principle of nuclear transparency by committing to publicly posting non-sensitive aggregate data on a routine basis, as administration officials have indicated they intend to do.

It is crucial, especially in these times, for the United States to demonstrate through our actions that we remain committed to implementing the Treaty fully and taking all reasonable measures to prevent nuclear use. Providing U.S. diplomats and our allies with the substance they need to show it is Russia and Russia alone that has injected nuclear dangers into the Ukraine crisis, and that the United States continues to champion the global disarmament and nonproliferation regime built up over the past 70 years is essential.

The accelerating trends toward greater nuclear salience, brinkmanship, and opacity are not in America's strategic interest. We must sustain our efforts to prevent escalation and proliferation and maintain a pathway to engagement with those countries that have the ability to threaten the United States and the world with nuclear weapons. We urge you to ensure the United States continues to lead the world in modeling responsible and constructive nuclear behavior, for our own security and in the growing battle for the hearts and minds of friends, allies, and partners around the world.

Respectfully,

Global Zero

Nuclear Threat Initiative

Ploughshares Fund

Arms Control Association

Federation of American Scientists

Foreign Policy for America

Union of Concerned Scientists

Win Without War

Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS)

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