

U.S., Russia OK new weapons reduction plan

by UPI

LONDON -- The United States and Russia agreed to "new and verifiable" reductions in arsenals, beginning with a new treaty, the countries' leaders said Wednesday.

U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev discussed nuclear arms control and reduction, both pledging to fulfill their obligations under a non-proliferation agreement and "demonstrate leadership in reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the world."

The two, meeting in advance of Thursday's Group of 20 summit, agreed to pursue "new and verifiable reductions in our strategic offensive arsenals in a step-by-step process, beginning by replacing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with a new, legally binding treaty," a statement from the meeting said. "We are instructing our negotiators to start talks immediately on this new treaty and to report on results achieved in working out the new agreement by July."

In addition, Obama and Medvedev discussed how to address the global economic crisis and take steps to ensure a similar crisis doesn't happen again.

Concerning security and stability in Europe, the leaders said, while disagreeing on the root of the Russian military incursion into Georgia last August, "we agreed that we must continue efforts toward a peaceful and lasting solution to the unstable situation today."

The two also announced the beginning of an intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation.

"Today we have outlined a comprehensive and ambitious work plan for our two governments," the statement said. "We both affirmed a mutual desire to organize contacts between our two governments in a more structured and regular way. ... Now it is time to get down to business and translate our warm words into actual achievements of benefit to Russia, the United States and all those around the world interested in peace and prosperity."

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