

Understanding President Trump's Truth Social Post on Nuclear Testing?

By

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On October 30, 2025, President Donald Trump posted to Truth Social, "The United States has more nuclear weapons than any other country. This was accomplished, including a complete update and renovation of existing weapons, during my first term in office. Because of the tremendous destructive power, I HATED to do it but had no choice! Russia is second, and China is a distant third, but will be even within 5 years. Because of other countries' testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our nuclear weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately. Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

The challenge with all such posts is that they never tell the whole story. Yes, Russia and China are refusing to enter arms control negotiations with the United States and Russia is believed to be conducting hydrostatic tests that produce a nuclear yield, but the President's post does not mean what you may think.

Contrary to the [wailing and gnashing of teeth](#) of arms control advocates after Trump's post, he is not calling for a return to detonating nuclear warheads under the Nevada desert. He is calling for something much different, which is why his post included, "...on an equal basis." This point is important and was seemingly lost on many.

What many Americans may not know is that the United States last tested a nuclear weapon in 1992 and has, since at least 1996, interpreted the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to mean that nuclear testing cannot produce a nuclear yield. Thus, the United States, has voluntarily followed the CTBT and produced "zero yield" in the many tests it has conducted over the past three decades. American scientists were able to verify the continued safety, security, and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear arsenal without producing an explosive yield.

President Trump is simply enabling American scientists to conduct hydrostatic tests that can provide higher fidelity results as the nation modernizes its existing nuclear warheads and begins building the first new nuclear warhead in more than a generation. This is a very important distinction.

The President, who often speaks in generalities, can be faulted for not offering a level of detail that explained his post more clearly, but articles claiming he does not understand nuclear testing may be less accurate than the President's critics believe. The relationship between the Department of War and the Department of Energy, when it comes to nuclear weapons, is symbiotic. The Department of Energy designs and builds the weapons at its federally funded and privately operated labs, under the management of the National Nuclear Security Agency, but the Department of War drives the demand for capabilities. Thus, criticizing the President for saying the Department of War will do the testing is a bit of a hollow victory.

With Russia unwilling to extend New START and China's continuing unwillingness to join multilateral arms control negotiations, President Trump's statement was an attempt at demonstrating American resolve in the face of America's declining nuclear position. The reality is that Russia understands its strength is in its nuclear forces, not its conventional capabilities.

If President Trump deserves criticism for anything, it is incorrectly suggesting that the American nuclear arsenal is superior to that of Russia; it is not. Russia's arsenal is both newer and larger than that of the United States.



Russia may also breakout of New START limits upon the treaty's expiration, which is a worrying prospect for the United States. Russia's [abrogation](#) the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 2023, in retaliation for Western support of Ukraine, is also concerning. It is, however, unsurprising. Before, Russia at least tried to ensure any violations of the "zero yield" understanding was hidden from the global public. That may cease if the Ukraine war continues. Although, President Trump's announcement may have contained Russian ambitions.

Russia may have announced "[reciprocal measures](#)" if the United States begins testing, but Vladimir Putin knows the US is looking to conduct tests at the same level as Russia's existing tests. [China](#) called on the US to uphold the moratorium on nuclear testing, but China may have also violated the "zero yield" threshold in its effort to build advanced nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, neither the Chinese nor Russian programs is particularly visible to Western monitoring efforts.

The prospects for Russo-American cooperation are low, but this should come as no surprise considering nuclear weapons are Russia's trump card, no pun intended, when it comes to limiting Western support to Ukraine. Putin cannot afford to lose in Ukraine. His head, quite literally, is on the line.

Chinese nuclear forces are still inferior to American nuclear forces, but not for long. Thus, joining multilateral negotiations are not in China's core interests as the Chinese Communist Party builds a nuclear arsenal fit for deterring American intervention with Chinese plans to seize Taiwan and perhaps other disputed territories. Of course China responded to President Trump's post by calling it "[unreasonable and unrealistic.](#)" Hypocrisy on nuclear issues will not, however, stop Chinese communists from expanding their arsenal.

President Trump's post is understandable given the world in which he finds himself. The President must try to deter continued Chinese and Russian aggression. If resuming nuclear testing helps, it is well worth the effort. What the President's words will not do is start an arms race. That would require the United States to be a participant, and the Chinese and Russians left the starting blocks long ago.

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