

# Senator: New START Ratification 'Likely'

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The chairman of the Federation Council's International Affairs Committee chose to keep the U.S. administration on their toes Monday, saying the Russian legislature was likely to ratify the New START treaty but that lawmakers may yet reconsider.

Ratification of the bilateral nuclear arms treaty, signed by Presidents Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama in April, was stalled by Republicans in the U.S. Senate, but eventually ratified last week with a resolution specifying that the deal will not affect the American missile defense program.

“There's currently a high possibility of [the Federation Council] ratifying the treaty on Jan. 26, passing it to the president to sign,” Mikhail Margelov said, Interfax reported.

But, in a carefully worded statement, he also said it was still possible that the ratification — required in both the State Duma and the Federation Council — could fall through.

“I sincerely hope that the ratification resolution passed by the American Senate will not prevent us from doing our part of the work,” said Margelov, who is a member of the ruling United Russia party. He did not elaborate.

The State Duma ratified the treaty in the first reading Friday, but criticized the Senate's resolution. A resolution to counter the U.S. one may be added by the legislature to the treaty during the second and third readings in January, said Viktor Zavarzin, chairman of the Duma's Defense Committee, Itar-Tass [reported](#) Friday.

The Kremlin had initially insisted on a "synchronized" ratification and Medvedev has urged lawmakers to approve the treaty as quickly as possible.

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