

Dick Lugar

U.S. Senator for Indiana

Date: 06/15/2010 • <http://lugar.senate.gov>
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Opening Statement for Hearing on the New START Treaty

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing.

I join the Chairman in welcoming our witnesses, Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller, the Chief Negotiator for the New START Treaty, and Dr. Edward Warner, the Secretary of Defense's Representative to negotiations on the Treaty.

Today we will explore technical issues related to the treaty's negotiation. Tomorrow, we will examine with Defense Department witnesses its deeper military implications, including modernization and missile defense issues.

Last week, the Committee heard closed testimony from both of today's witnesses. That session was extremely valuable in advancing our understanding of missile defense considerations in the treaty. We gained a much better picture of the intent of our negotiators, and I hope that we will continue to make progress today. What were the understandings of the negotiators relative to missile defense and the meaning and effect of these provisions, especially concerning the grounds for withdrawal from the New START Treaty? Did the Russians say, as has often been asserted, that these provisions were merely for their domestic political consumption, or do they view them as a binding obligation on the United States that will inhibit future missile defense development and deployment?

Tomorrow, we will be able to ask Defense Department witnesses Dr. James Miller and General O'Reilly of the Missile Defense Agency about their conversations with the Russians on missile defense, but today we will hear from the negotiators about what their goals were in agreeing to the missile defense language in the treaty.

We also have heard testimony about tactical nuclear weapons, in particular, from former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger and former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft. What consideration was given to tactical nuclear weapons during negotiations on the New START Treaty, and how would the Treaty contribute to achieving binding limits on tactical weapons in the future?

It will be important for Dr. Warner to share with us how the views of the Defense Department were reflected in the final treaty. Does the New START Treaty provide flexibility sufficient to deal with strategic changes and to meet our deterrence missions?

Bomber counting rules under New START have been criticized, but in this area, the treaty appears to continue guidance first set down by President Reagan. The START I Treaty counted 10 warheads for 150 U.S. bombers and 8 warheads for up to 180 Russian bombers. Bombers in excess of these limits counted for the number of warheads deployed on each. New START counts just one weapon for every bomber.

President Reagan's position was to minimize the counting of bombers, reflecting their stabilizing nature. Counting bomber warheads at all in START I was a concession. Testifying before this Committee on START I in 1992, Ambassador Ronald Lehman stated: "Even as...we established lower ceilings on the most destabilizing ballistic missile systems...we sought flexible treatment of bombers and cruise

missiles...and we succeeded in achieving our objective.” In counting one weapon per bomber, the New START Treaty advances the legacy of bomber stability and flexibility initiated by President Reagan.

Verification of compliance and our ability to monitor the limits of this treaty remain central to the Senate’s evaluation. Secretary Gottemoeller has stated that she believes that the New START Treaty fixes a number of the compliance issues we faced under START. Our witnesses should discuss at length how the verification regime has been modified under New START and why these changes will fulfill our current verification requirements.

As I noted during our May 18th hearing with Secretaries Clinton and Gates and Admiral Mullen, the Administration must make a special effort to produce the National Intelligence Estimate and a formal Verification Assessment related to the treaty. The Verification Assessment is the direct responsibility of the State Department. I asked the Secretaries that day to devote their personal energies to accelerating the delivery of these reports to the Senate. Today, I would ask Secretary Gottemoeller and Dr. Warner to do the same. The President has declared the New START Treaty to be a top legislative objective and has called for Senate approval this year. Failing to deliver these reviews related to START in expedited fashion would diminish perceptions of the priority of the treaty and complicate Senate debate.

The task facing Members of this Committee is to continue to clarify areas of ambiguity so that we can craft a responsible and transparent resolution of ratification. I believe that such a resolution can command strong support in the Senate, and that we can act on the treaty with confidence this year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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