

**U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Chairman John F. Kerry**  
**July 15, 2010**

**Chairman Kerry Opening Statement At New START Treaty Hearing On  
“Maintaining a Safe, Secure and Effective Nuclear Arsenal”**

**Washington, DC** – This afternoon, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-MA) will chair the Committee’s twelfth hearing on the New START Treaty. Today’s hearing with the directors of the United States’ nuclear weapons laboratories will address the treaty’s implications for the nation’s nuclear weapons infrastructure.

*The full text of his statement as prepared is below:*

Today we are pleased to welcome the directors of our nation’s three nuclear weapons laboratories. Together, they are responsible for maintaining the safety and reliability of our deterrent force. That is a task requiring not only a great commitment to our nation’s defense but the highest degree of scientific knowledge and technical skill. We are fortunate that this responsibility has fallen to the three dedicated professionals with us this afternoon.

This is our twelfth hearing on the New START Treaty. We have scrutinized the text of the treaty, its protocol, and its three technical annexes. We have reviewed a national intelligence estimate on the agreement, a State Department report on its verifiability, and an analysis of Russian compliance with past arms control treaties. We have heard from twenty witnesses from across the ideological spectrum—some more than once. As Henry Kissinger said, the hearing process has been not just bipartisan; it has been nonpartisan.

Throughout the process, one thing has become clear: the New START Treaty will make a vital contribution to American security. It will limit the number of nuclear weapons deployed by the United States and Russia. It will give us flexibility about how we meet those limits. Its verification provisions will deepen our understanding of Russia’s nuclear forces. And, perhaps most importantly, it will strengthen our efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to rogue states and terrorists.

Support for the New START Treaty has been overwhelming—from both Republicans and Democrats. In our first hearing, James Schlesinger called ratification QUOTE “obligatory.” James Baker said that New START is an important part of our efforts to strengthen the nonproliferation regime. And Stephen Hadley, George W. Bush’s national security adviser, said that we need to see this treaty in the context of a 20-year effort spanning administrations of both parties.

Those same points were made again two weeks ago, when thirty high-ranking former officials released a letter calling for ratification. That prestigious group included four former secretaries of state; four former secretaries of defense; and the chair and vice chair of the 9/11 Commission. Many of the signatories, like George Shultz, served in the Reagan administration. Their participation reminded us that the process of strategic reductions, supported by intrusive verification, is one of President Reagan’s greatest legacies. That legacy has always garnered strong, bipartisan support in the Senate: the INF Treaty, the original START Treaty, and the Moscow Treaty were all approved by overwhelming majorities.

But this committee has not offered its support automatically. We have asked tough questions—and we have gotten answers to those questions.

At first, some expressed concern that the treaty’s verification provisions are not as stringent as those in the original START Treaty. But we have learned that this treaty includes new tools like unique identifying numbers for all delivery vehicles. Its inspections will provide new information, such as the number of warheads on each

missile. And of course the treaty's verification provisions are far more than what we have now, which is nothing.

There has also been concern that the treaty limits our missile defense options. We have pressed our nation's top military officials on this issue, and their response has been unanimous: This treaty will not constrain missile defense in any meaningful way. The United States will continue to develop and deploy defenses against possible attack from states like North Korea and Iran. Anyone who opposes this treaty because of alleged restrictions on missile defense needs to explain why his military judgment is better than that of the general in charge of Strategic Command, the general directing the Missile Defense Agency, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Today, we are going to discuss a final issue that skeptics have raised: how to ensure that the weapons we retain under the treaty are adequately maintained. As our colleague Senator Kyl wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* last week, the New START Treaty should be considered within the context of our overall nuclear weapons policy, including funding for the nuclear infrastructure. I agree with that. But as these issues are interrelated, we must move forward on both of them together.

The President has requested \$80 billion over the next ten years to maintain our nuclear weapons and modernize the nuclear complex so that we can preserve our nuclear deterrent for as long as we need it. Eighty billion dollars is a significant investment, representing a 15 percent increase over baseline spending even after accounting for inflation—that's an additional \$1 billion per year. Linton Brooks, who served President George W. Bush as the head of the National Nuclear Security Administration, has said he would have killed for a budget like this.

I'd like to assure our witnesses that that won't be necessary. But now we must also move ahead on New START. If we do not, we will set back the cause of American nuclear security. This treaty marks an important step toward safety in a world threatened by rogue states and terrorists with nuclear ambitions. As Dr. Kissinger said, this committee's decision will affect the prospects for peace for a decade or more.

Our witnesses today are responsible for maintaining the health of our nuclear arsenal. Dr. Michael Anastasio is the director of Los Alamos National Laboratory; Dr. George Miller is the director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; and Dr. Paul Hommert is the director of Sandia National Laboratories.

Gentlemen, it is an honor to have each of you here today, and I look forward to your testimony.

Let me add that we will enter into the record the testimony of Linton Brooks, whose appearance before the committee was canceled when the Senate marked the death of Senator Robert Byrd earlier this month.

I'd also like to enter into the record [a letter I received yesterday from Secretary Shultz and from our former colleague Sam Nunn](#), in which they strongly endorsed the New START Treaty and called for its swift ratification.

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