

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2019

Phillip Swagel
Director
Congressional Budget Office
Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Dr. Swagel:

The 2011 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) between the United States and Russia, an agreement which limits the number of strategic nuclear weapon warheads and delivery systems that each country may field, will expire in February 2021 unless both parties agree to a 5-year extension. To date, the Trump Administration has not indicated that it intends to pursue an extension.

If the New START Treaty is allowed to expire, there will be no limits on the size of the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia for the first time in over 25 years. Moreover, each side will lose the right to conduct onsite inspections of the other's strategic nuclear forces and assurances the other party will not interfere with or conceal critical systems from surveillance using satellites and other methods. In the absence of those transparency and confidence building measures in New START (as well as previous treaties), both parties will lose a means to have direct knowledge of their adversary's capabilities. This situation will lead to potentially destabilizing uncertainty regarding each sides' forces, and could lead both sides to increase their arsenals to hedge against that uncertainty, which could in turn lead to an arms race like the one we experienced during the Cold War.

We request that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) provide an analysis of this topic, in particular looking at the costs that the United States could incur if the New START Treaty is allowed to expire. This analysis should consider several scenarios in which the United States increases the size of its strategic nuclear arsenal, either in response to a Russian increase of the same amount or as a hedge against the uncertainty about whether Russia might be increasing the capabilities of its forces quantitatively or qualitatively. Those scenarios should include: increasing the number of deployed warheads by uploading only (that is, loading more warheads on fielded delivery systems that currently carry fewer warheads than their full capacity would allow); increasing the number of warheads up to the limits of the Moscow Treaty by increasing the number of delivery systems; and increasing the number of warheads and delivery systems to the limits that had been negotiated for the START II Treaty or START Treaty. To the extent possible, we would also like CBO to explore other areas, such as infrastructure for warhead and

fissile materials production, and space surveillance and intelligence analysis, where costs might increase if the United States abandons nuclear arms control.

We would like CBO to produce a report with the results of its analysis by April 2020, in time for consideration of this matter during the discussion of the defense authorization bill for fiscal year 2021.

If your staff has questions about this request, they may contact Lowell Schwartz (lowell_schwartz@foreign.senate.gov) or Leonor Tomero (leonor.tomero@mail.house.gov).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee