

Opening Statement by Assistant Secretary of State
for Verification, Compliance, and Implementation
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to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, and members of the Foreign Relations Committee, I am very happy to have this opportunity today to provide my perspective as chief negotiator of the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, the “New START” Treaty, and to respond to your questions.

I believe there is every reason for the Senate to provide its advice and consent to ratification of the New START Treaty. The Treaty is a continuation of the international arms control and nonproliferation framework that the United States has worked hard to foster and strengthen for the last 50 years. It will provide ongoing transparency and predictability regarding the world’s two largest deployed nuclear arsenals, while preserving our ability to maintain the strong nuclear deterrent that remains an essential element of U.S. national security and the security of our allies and friends.

Presidents Obama and Medvedev described it best when, upon signing the Treaty on April 8 in Prague, President Obama called it “an important milestone for nuclear security and non-proliferation, and for U.S.-Russia relations” and President Medvedev declared it a “win-win situation.”

A little over a year ago, the Administration set out to negotiate the New START Treaty with the goal of replacing the expiring START Treaty with a new agreement mandating lower levels of strategic offensive arms. We were also determined to move beyond Cold War mentalities and chart a fresh start in our relations with Russia. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review concluded that U.S. national security would not be negatively affected by a reduction in our nuclear arsenal, especially considering that the most immediate threats we face today are nuclear proliferation and terrorism. The United States could sustain a stable deterrence with significantly fewer deployed warheads and strategic delivery vehicles than permitted under earlier arms control agreements. It further recognized that we need to cooperate with Russia as our partner to meet these threats and other global challenges.

The negotiations benefited from our long experience with implementing the INF Treaty, the START Treaty, and the Moscow Treaty. We began with a far better understanding of each other's strategic forces than we had when we were negotiating the original START agreement. Several members of both delegations had extensive experience implementing the START Treaty, including inspections of strategic facilities. The U.S. negotiating team was especially rich in experienced inspectors, as Dr. Warner can attest.

Indeed, my colleague, Ted Warner, and I are two representatives of a strong interagency negotiating team that cooperated very effectively in agreeing, through a thorough interagency process, on the concept and substance of the Treaty. The strength of this new Treaty rests on the fact that we took into account the broad perspectives of the State Department, the Defense Department, the uniformed military, the Energy Department, and others at the outset and at every step throughout the negotiation process.

As I often noted during the negotiations, the New START Treaty is a hybrid of START and the Moscow Treaty – New START has its conceptual roots in both treaties. It contains a comprehensive verification regime as does START, to provide for predictability, but it recognizes that we are no longer in a Cold War relationship. Thus, it allows each Party to determine for itself the composition and structure of its strategic offensive arms and how reductions will be made. This flexibility is the great contribution of the Moscow Treaty, and it will be important to our national security as we move forward to further reductions.

The three central numerical limits in the New START Treaty will affect the Parties in different ways because our strategic forces are structured differently. Each Party must make decisions regarding its force structure with respect to all three limits. For example, Russia currently has fewer operational launchers than the United States, but it has a number of inactive submarines and ICBM launchers that it will have to eliminate in order to meet the aggregate limit of 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers and nuclear-capable heavy bombers.

The warhead counting rules in this Treaty are a significant innovation. The Parties will receive a realistic accounting of the number of reentry vehicles actually emplaced on each Party's deployed ICBMs and SLBMs, and the opportunity to monitor the declared numbers through on-site inspections. While neither Party carries any nuclear armaments on its bombers on a day-to-day basis, the Parties agreed to an attribution rule of one warhead per nuclear-capable heavy bomber rather than count them at zero. This attribution rule strikes a balance between the

fact that neither side loads nuclear armaments on its bombers on a day-to-day basis and the fact that these bombers have a nuclear mission. Furthermore, heavy bombers have long been considered to be more stabilizing than ICBMs or SLBMs because, as “slow-flyers” compared to ballistic missiles, they are not well suited to be used as first-strike weapons.

The Treaty’s verification regime will give us an important window into the Russian strategic arsenal. The regime includes extensive provisions that contribute to verification of the Parties’ compliance, including notifications, data exchanges, agreed conversion and elimination procedures, inspections, demonstrations, and exhibitions. It also includes some significant innovations over the START verification regime, such as the provision of unique identifiers for all ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers, and reentry vehicle onsite inspections that are designed to monitor the exact number of reentry vehicles emplaced on individual missiles.

The verification regime will provide each Party confidence that the other is upholding its obligations, while also being simpler and less costly to implement than START. The regime reflects the improved U.S.-Russian relationship since the end of the Cold War and reduces the disruptions to operations at strategic nuclear forces facilities imposed by START.

The Treaty protects our ability to develop and deploy a conventional prompt global strike capability, should we pursue such a capability. As eminent Russian foreign policy expert Dr. Sergei Karaganov has noted, it was not possible for Russia to secure a ban on U.S. development and deployment of high-precision non-nuclear strategic systems.¹ We were firm during the negotiations that the Treaty must allow for strategic missiles in conventional configuration, and also that future non-nuclear systems of strategic range that do not otherwise meet the definitions of the Treaty should not be considered “new kinds of strategic offensive arms” for purposes of the Treaty.

The Administration shares the Congress’ concern that there should not be constraints on U.S. efforts to defend ourselves and our allies from missile attacks launched by third parties. The Treaty does not constrain our current or planned missile defenses, and in fact contains no meaningful restrictions on missile defenses of any kind. The preamble’s acknowledgement of the interrelationship

¹ <http://karaganov.ru/en/publications/preview/206>

between offensive and defensive arms is not new; it has been acknowledged for decades in prior strategic arms control treaties.

Moreover, for decades it has not been the policy of the United States to undermine the Soviet or Russian strategic offensive forces with ballistic missile defenses. Ronald Reagan, at the time he announced the Strategic Defense Initiative in 1983, said, “We seek neither military superiority nor political advantage. Our only purpose -- one all people share -- is to search for ways to reduce the danger of nuclear war.” Beginning with George H.W. Bush, our missile defense policy has focused on defending the United States, our troops, our friends and allies, from limited ballistic missile threats.

Regarding the unilateral statements on missile defense associated with the Treaty, the United States has made clear our intention to continue improving and deploying our missile defense systems, in order to defend ourselves and our allies against limited attacks. We did not agree to Russia’s unilateral statement, and the Russian statement in no way changes the legal rights or obligations of the Parties under the Treaty. The fact that Russia felt compelled to make its unilateral statement is, in fact, a striking piece of evidence that they were unable to restrict our missile defenses in any meaningful way in the agreement itself. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov said in an interview published in the newspaper “Russia Today” on April 19, “We have never ever believed that it would be possible through this Treaty, the scope of which covers exclusively strategic offensive arms, to be able to limit capabilities of another Party in the area of strategic defence.”²

In addition, Russian President Medvedev said in an interview with ABC News on April 9, “I would not want to create the impression that any change would be construed as grounds for suspending a treaty that we have only just signed. Moreover, we agreed – I discussed this with President Obama, and our respective administrations discussed it – that we should cooperate on building a global missile defence system. But if events develop in such a way as to ultimately change the fundamental situation Russia would be able to raise this issue with the USA.”³

To those who may have concerns regarding alleged back-room deals during the Treaty negotiations, let me state unequivocally today on the record before this

² http://rt.com/Top_News/2010-04-19/ryabkov-nuclear-programme-iran.html

³ <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/transcripts/1>

Committee that there were no/no secret deals made in connection with the New START Treaty; not on missile defense or any other issue. Everything we agreed to is in the Treaty documents transmitted to the Senate on May 13. I also want to make clear that Article XV of the Treaty authorizes the Bilateral Consultative Commission to make changes in the Protocol without resorting to the Treaty amendment procedures only where such changes do not affect substantive rights or obligations under the Treaty. This provision is similar to the provisions contained in, and successfully implemented under, the START Treaty.

The New START Treaty represents a significant step forward in building a stable, cooperative relationship with Russia. But this Treaty is not just about Washington and Moscow. It advances the security of the entire world. By giving added stability and transparency to the relationship between the world's two largest nuclear powers and by demonstrating that we are living up to our obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we enhance our credibility to convince other governments to help strengthen the international nonproliferation regime and confront proliferators.

Mr. Chairman, in sum, I believe that the New START Treaty is in the interests of the United States and is the right treaty for today. It will restore the transparency and predictability that START provided, preserve the flexibility enshrined in the Moscow Treaty, contribute to our efforts to reinvigorate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and take us another step toward achieving the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapons-free world.

Thank you.