

**U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Chairman John F. Kerry**  
**Opening Statement for START Treaty Hearing**  
**April 29, 2010**

## **Chairman Kerry Opening At Hearing On The START Treaty**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-MA) today released the following statement at a hearing titled, “The Historical and Modern Context for U.S.- Russian Arms Control”:

*Chairman Kerry’s opening statement as prepared is below:*

Thank you all for coming. This afternoon, we begin a series of hearings on the New START Treaty. In the coming weeks, administration witnesses and outside experts from across the political spectrum will testify about this historic opportunity to reduce the threat posed by nuclear weapons. An honest and thorough discussion will be an important part of building the kind of bipartisan support the treaty requires and—I believe—deserves.

This treaty marks a significant step forward for both America and Russia. It will cut by nearly a third the maximum number of deployed strategic warheads. It institutes an effective new verification regime. And overall, it puts us firmly on the path toward reducing our reliance on nuclear weapons.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will hear differences of opinion on some of the specifics of the treaty, including missile defense, telemetry, and ICBMs. And I welcome a thorough exploration of each of these issues. But at the outset, I think we should focus on a single, overarching question: does this treaty make us safer? From everything that I have read and heard so far, the answer to that question is yes.

This treaty improves our security because it increases certainty, stability and transparency between two countries that together hold 95% of the world’s nuclear weapons—and it does so while retaining for America the flexibility to protect ourselves and our allies in Europe and around the world.

Day by day, since the START Treaty and its verification measures expired last December, we have been losing crucial visibility into the Russian nuclear program. This new treaty will restore that capacity, and in some ways enhance it— and the sooner we get that done, the better.

This treaty also strengthens a global nonproliferation regime that is under threat today. Every step America takes to honor our end of the NPT bargain makes it easier for others to partner with us—both in pressuring Iran and North Korea to honor their own commitments and in preventing nuclear terrorism.

This treaty’s benefits extend far beyond nuclear security. When Presidents Obama and Medvedev signed the accord in Prague earlier this month, they took a major step forward in U.S.-Russia relations as well.

In the next few weeks, we expect formal delivery of the treaty and accompanying documents from the administration, so we can get down to the details. We already know that some will contend that any negotiated reduction in our nuclear arsenal endangers our national security. As much as I disagree, I am determined to work with Senator Lugar to conduct a series of hearings that explore and answer the full range of concerns from supporters and skeptics alike.

Next month, we will hear from Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen. We will hear from the team that spent a year in tough and ultimately successful negotiations with the Russians, and from the

intelligence officials charged with monitoring Russia's strategic forces. We will also hear from Henry Kissinger, James Baker, and other officials who, like today's witnesses, can provide firsthand knowledge and perspective on the history of arms control.

On a matter this vital to America's national security, it's more important than ever that we put aside politics and judge this treaty on its merits. This should not be a partisan issue. Some of the most important arms control treaties have been negotiated by Republican Presidents. Remember, it was Ronald Reagan who began negotiations on the original START Treaty, and George H.W. Bush who completed them. And that treaty was approved with the overwhelming support of Democrats.

In fact, the New START Treaty reflects concerns raised by Senators on both sides of the aisle and shared by our negotiators. It emphasizes verification. It will not inhibit our missile defense. It will not prevent us from fielding strategic conventional weapons. The START and SORT agreements with Russia were approved by large majorities of both parties. And we can do it again this year.

Few people know the history of arms control better than our two witnesses this afternoon. They have offered trusted strategic advice to presidents for over four decades, and we are fortunate to have their guidance at the outset of our journey.

Dr. James Schlesinger has been called "the former Secretary of Everything." He served Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Secretary of Defense, Director of Central Intelligence and Secretary of Energy. He has been an important voice of caution regarding the limits of arms control agreements as tools of US foreign policy and I am eager to hear his thoughts today.

Dr. William Perry served as Secretary of Defense during the Clinton Administration. He is also a long-time professor at Stanford University. In 2008 and 2009, Dr. Perry served as chairman of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States. His vice chairman was Jim Schlesinger.

Gentlemen, welcome back. You have helped to guide us in the past, and we are honored by your presence today as we begin our hearings on the New START treaty.

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