

FINAL FOR SUBMISSION

**STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
ROBERT M. GATES  
BEFORE THE  
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
HEARING ON THE NEW START TREATY  
MAY 18, 2010**



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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding the agreement between the United States and Russia on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. This treaty reduces the strategic nuclear forces of our two nations in a manner that strengthens the strategic stability of our relationship and protects the security of the American people and our allies.

America's nuclear arsenal remains a vital pillar of our national security, deterring potential adversaries and reassuring allies and partners. As such, the first step of the year-long Nuclear Posture Review was an extensive analysis which, among other things, determined how many delivery vehicles and deployed warheads were needed. This in turn provided the basis for our negotiations. The results of those studies give me confidence that the Department of Defense will be able to maintain a strong and effective nuclear deterrent while modernizing our weapons to ensure they are safe, secure, and reliable, all within the limits of this new treaty.

The U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent will continue to be based on the Triad of delivery systems – intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and nuclear-capable heavy bombers – within the boundaries negotiated in the New START Treaty. Those are:

- An upper boundary of 1550 deployed warheads;
- Up to 700 deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers; and
- Up to 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments.

Under this treaty, we retain the power to determine the composition of our force structure, allowing the United States complete flexibility to deploy, maintain, and modernize our strategic nuclear forces in the manner that best protects our national security interests. The Defense Department has established a baseline force structure to guide our planning, one that does not require changes to current or planned basing arrangements.

- The department will retain 240 deployed submarine-launched ballistic missiles distributed among 14 submarines, each of which will have 20 launch tubes. This is the most survivable leg of the Triad, and reducing the number of missiles carried on each boomer from 24 to 20 will facilitate Navy planning for the Ohio-class submarine replacement.
- Recognizing the flexibility of the bomber leg of the Triad, we will retain up to 60 deployed heavy bombers, including all 18 operational B-2s. At the same time, we have

to consider the Air Force's planning for a long-range strike replacement and plan to convert a number of B-52Hs to a conventional-only role.

- Finally, the U.S. will retain up to 420 deployed single-warhead Minuteman III ICBMs at our current three missile bases.

Let me also address some of the things that New START treaty will *not* affect.

First, the treaty will not constrain the United States from deploying the most effective missile defenses possible, nor impose additional costs or barriers on those defenses. As the administration's Ballistic Missile Defense Review and budget plans make clear, the United States will continue to improve our capability to defend ourselves, our deployed forces, and our allies and partners against ballistic missile threats. We made this clear to the Russians in a unilateral statement made in connection with the treaty.

Furthermore, the New START does not restrict our ability to develop and deploy prompt conventional strike capabilities that could attack targets anywhere on the globe in an hour or less. The treaty's limit of 700 deployed delivery vehicles combined with the associated ceiling of 1550 deployed warheads accommodates the limited number of conventional warheads we may need for this capability. We are also currently examining potential future long-range weapons systems for prompt global strike that would not be limited by the treaty.

In my view, a key contribution of this treaty is its provision for a strong verification regime. While the intelligence community will provide a detailed classified assessment, I would like to emphasize some of the key elements of this regime, which provides a firm basis for monitoring Russia's compliance with its treaty obligations while also providing important insights into the size and composition of Russian strategic forces.

- The treaty allows each party to conduct up to 18 onsite inspections each year at operating bases for ICBMs, SSBNs, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers, as well as storage facilities, test ranges, and conversion and elimination facilities.
- The agreement establishes a database, which will be initially populated 45 days after the treaty enters into force and updated every six months thereafter, that will help provide the United States with a "rolling" overall picture of Russia's strategic offensive forces. This picture is further supplemented by the large number of notifications required, which will track the movement and changes in status of strategic offensive arms covered by the treaty.
- Unique identifiers assigned to each ICBM, SLBM, and nuclear-capable heavy bomber will allow us to track the disposition and patterns of operation of accountable systems throughout their life cycles.

- The treaty provides for non-interference with national technical means of verification, such as reconnaissance satellites, ground stations, and ships. This provides us with an independent method of gathering information that assist in validating data declarations.
- While telemetry is not needed to verify the provisions of this treaty, the terms nonetheless call for the exchange of telemetry on up to five launches per year per side.

I am confident that the New START treaty will in no way compromise America's nuclear deterrent. In many ways, the primary threat to the effectiveness and credibility of the deterrent is one that we control ourselves, and that is failing to invest adequately in our nation's nuclear weapons infrastructure – a point I have made a number of times in recent years. Maintaining an adequate stockpile of safe, secure, and reliable nuclear warheads requires a reinvigoration of our nuclear weapons complex – that is, our infrastructure and our science, technology, and engineering base.

To this end, the Department of Defense is transferring \$4.6 billion to the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration through Fiscal Year 2015. This transfer will assist in funding critical nuclear weapons life extension programs and efforts to modernize the nuclear weapons infrastructure. The initial applications of this funding, along with an additional \$1.1 billion being transferred for naval nuclear reactors, are reflected in the Defense and Energy Department's FY11 budget requests, which I urge the Congress to approve. These investments, and the Nuclear Posture Review's strategy for warhead life extension, represent a credible modernization plan to sustain the nuclear infrastructure and support our nation's deterrent.

I would close with this. I first began working on strategic arms control with the Russians in 1970, a U.S. effort that led to the first Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement with Moscow two years later. The key question then and in the decades since has always been the same: is the United States better off with an agreement or without it? The answer for each successive president has always been: "with an agreement." The U.S. Senate has always agreed, approving each treaty by lopsided, bipartisan margins.

The same answer holds true for New START: the U.S. is far better off with this treaty than without it, and I am confident that it is the right agreement for today and for the future. It increases stability and predictability, allows us to sustain a strong nuclear Triad, and preserves our flexibility to deploy the nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities needed for effective deterrence and defense. In light of all of these factors, I urge the Senate to give its advice and consent to ratification of the New START Treaty.

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