

FINAL FOR SUBMISSION

**STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT M. GATES  
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
JUNE 17, 2010**

Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, members of the Committee:

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

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 nuclear delivery vehicles and deployed warheads were needed. This in turn provided the basis for our negotiations of New START. 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 that they are safe, secure and reliable, all within the limits of the new treaty.

The U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent will continue to be based on the triad of delivery systems – intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers – within the boundaries negotiated in the New START treaty.

Those are:

- An upper boundary of 1,550 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 a 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.
- Recognizing the need for flexibility in the bomber leg, we will retain up to 60 deployed heavy bombers, including all 18 operational B-2s.
- Finally, the U.S. will retain up to 420 deployed single-warhead Minuteman 3 ICBMs at our current three missile bases.

Let me also address some of the things that the 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. I remain

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confident in the U.S. missile defense program, which has made considerable advancements, including the testing and development of the SM-3 missile, which we will deploy in Europe.

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.

It is not surprising that Russia continues to object to our missile defense program as they have objected to all U.S. missile defense efforts for several decades. The Russians know that our missile defenses are designed to intercept a limited number of ballistic missiles launched by a country such as Iran or North Korea. Our missile defenses do not have the capability to defend against the Russian Federation's large, advanced arsenal. Consequentially, U.S. missile defenses do not, and will not, affect Russia's strategic deterrent. To build such a capability – a missile shield of the kind envisioned in the 1980's – is technologically unfeasible, cost prohibitive, and destabilizing. Therefore we have no plans to do so. Separately from the treaty, we are discussing missile defense cooperation with Russia, which we believe is in the interest of both nations.

Furthermore, the New START treaty does not restrict our ability to develop and deploy conventional prompt global 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 ceiling of 1,550 deployed warheads, accommodates the limited number of conventional warheads we may need for this capability. We are also currently examining potential future prompt global strike systems that would not be limited by this 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 will monitor Russia's compliance with the treaty while also providing important insights into the size and composition of Russian strategic forces.

- The treaty allows each party to conduct up to 18 on-site 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, updated every six months, which will help provide the United States with a rolling overall picture of Russia's strategic offensive forces.
- Unique identifiers for the first time will be assigned to each ICBM, SLBM and nuclear-capable heavy bomber, allowing us to track accountable systems throughout their life cycles.
- The treaty provides for noninterference with national technical means of verification such as reconnaissance satellites, ground stations and ships.
- 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, for each side.

I am confident that the New START treaty will in no way compromise America's nuclear deterrent. Maintaining a credible deterrent requires an adequate stockpile of safe, secure and

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reliable nuclear warheads. This calls for 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 President's FY 2011 budget request, which I urge the Congress to approve. These investments and the Nuclear Posture Review 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 a final observation. I first began working on strategic arms control with the Russians in 1970, 40 years ago, 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 a strategic arms agreement with the Russians, or without it? The answer for successive presidents of both parties 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 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 these factors, I urge the Senate to give its advice and consent to ratification on the new treaty.

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