

United States Senate
Committee on Armed Services

New START

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Testimony of
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Chairman Levin, Ranking Member McCain, and other members of the Committee, I am honored to be invited to present a very brief summary of my views on several aspects of the New START Treaty and then attempt to answer any questions you may have.

Nuclear Deterrence. As the Committee knows well, the purpose of our strategic nuclear deterrent is to deter the use of nuclear weapons against the U.S. and our allies, and large scale war, and not to fight a nuclear war. But, to be effective it needs to insure that no potential nuclear adversary could believe that they could gain more than they would lose by an attributable attack on the U.S. or on those supported by our extended deterrent. The existence of dynamic military delivery and nuclear warhead infrastructures is also an important deterrent.

The Administration has made its' case to support ratification of New START and concerns have been raised regarding such issues as MIRV'd payloads, missiles on ships, aircraft and trains, the omission of Russian tactical nuclear weapons, linkage of Russian offensive missiles to our missile defense, also the counting of our possible Conventional Prompt Global Strike, visibility of changes negotiated by the Bilateral Consultative Commission, provisions for verifications, etc. These concerns raise important issues for U.S. security. During the next few months the Senate will have an opportunity to carefully examine these concerns and the Administration's responses prior to providing its advice and consent. At this time I'll just make a brief comment on the verification provisions.

Verification. The importance and value of verification increases as the negotiated number of weapons decreases. New START verification, in my judgment, is inadequate to give us the depth of knowledge that we will need, given Russian military doctrine and modernization programs. I assume we all believe in the necessity to "Trust but Verify". Unfortunately, past compliance by the Soviet Union/Russia and our inability or unwillingness to force compliance does not provide a firm foundation for this treaty. Second, the provisions in New START are significantly less demanding than START I. The provision for visits (up to 18 per year) is substantially less than we found necessary under START I. Third, a monitoring station at the Russian assembly plant at Volkinsk is no longer permitted and missile telemetry, which we have found very useful, is greatly reduced. These limitations could become serious over the next ten years if the

Russian economy and priority to strategic nuclear systems ramp up their modernization program. I understand that currently there are fewer facilities, that we can expect 24-hour notice of an identified missile leaving the assembly plant and that we can count the number of warheads on each deployed missile. But there are no limitations on new missile characteristics and more telemetry would be very important if we chose, for example, to defend our ICBM's.

Given this situation, and based on our perception of Russia's intentions, I believe that more visibility is needed. And we need to be alert to the fact that intentions can change much more rapidly than capabilities. Hence, I urge that we continue to explore verification approaches.

New START would limit U.S. and Russian deployed delivery vehicles to 700 and nuclear warheads to 1550. For our current situation General Chilton and Secretary Gates have testified that with those numbers and some specific assumptions regarding our future needs, nuclear deterrence can still be maintained. But things do change. In the future even smaller numbers could possibly still be effective or larger numbers of offensive launchers and or defenses might be needed. Our nuclear enterprise must be resilient to such potential changes. For example, we should maintain a Triad because we depend on the special and different characteristics of each leg to provide retaliatory capability that is credible to the attacker. The heavy bombers provide for communication of intent and resolve and when generated are survivable. ICBMs provide responsive command and control and ballistic missile submarines, survivability. It is important to understand that the need for a Triad is not dependent on numbers. But if the numbers of delivery vehicles were to change, then the strategy and its associated targeting would have to change.

A Nuclear Turning Point? President Obama's commitment to maintain nuclear deterrence for the foreseeable future, the DOD's NPR, and the FY11-15 budgets all mark a possible turning point in plans from the 20-year decline of our strategic nuclear deterrent, its maintenance and supporting infrastructure.

- The venerable B-52 and aging B-2 heavy bombers are to receive upgraded communications, flight systems, radar and structural improvements. Funds are also included to define a follow-on heavy bomber. The Air Force also plans to study the need to develop an

advanced, reliable strategic nuclear cruise missile for heavy bombers to replace the aging ALCM.

- The Minuteman III ICBM's are to be upgraded and maintained until 2030. Planning is also underway for a follow-on ICBM.
- The service life of the Navy's submarine leg of the Triad and its ballistic missiles are planned to be upgraded and extended to 2042. To provide a replacement of the Trident submarine, the Navy is designing a new submarine and follow-on missiles.

Preliminary estimates of costs for future strategic systems have led Secretary Gates to request the services to find ways to substantially reduce their costs. One attractive opportunity to reduce missile costs would be for the Air Force and Navy to agree on common missile/warhead interfaces, common booster missile production facilities and depot level support capabilities.

But for the trend in our nuclear deterrent to turn around will require that Congress support the DoD strategic program requests. And we also need to recognize that the nuclear weapons complex is an essential component of DoD's capability. History tells us that it will require an extraordinary sustained commitment to the long term needs to maintain the strategic deterrent. While we see an encouraging focus now, it will take continuing attention on the part of Congress and successive administrations to keep it on track. Beyond maintaining our current aging deterrent we need to not only complete the current studies but to start programs that will position us to deploy modern replacement systems when needed. I suggest that the Senate request a policy commitment from the administration to replace our aging force structure with modern systems.

Turning Point for Nuclear Warheads? The FY 11-15 budgets would provide increased support for warhead life extension programs, warhead surveillance and mandatory fixes and also to boost computing, science, engineering and laboratory experiments. In implementing the life extension programs it is important that the laboratories are free to pursue approaches that, in their judgment, best provide for safety and reliability. In addition, budgets are estimated for new facilities, in particular CMRR at Los Alamos for research on plutonium and UPF, a uranium

parts manufacturing plant at Oakridge in Tennessee. The Committee should understand that at present we do not yet have good cost estimates for the new facilities, each of which are expected to cost billions of dollars. There is general concern that their costs will exceed the preliminary estimates and that may force major reductions in other NNSA nuclear weapons activities to include warhead surveillance, the life extensions and science programs. Such a development would turn us back into the situation we have faced for the last 5 years. I have suggested that the Nuclear Weapons Council initiate a thorough scrub of the necessary capabilities and construction costs for the new facilities to insure that safety, security, programmatic risks and costs are effectively managed.

Certification. Congress has directed that each year the Laboratory Directors, Commander STRATCOM, and the Secretaries of Defense and Energy submit letters to the President certifying as to the safety, security and reliability of the nuclear deterrent in the absence of nuclear testing. However, in prior years, the Laboratory Directors have expressed increasing concerns because of both the cumulative changes to the warheads from their life extensions and reductions in warhead surveillance and reduced funding of the Stockpile Stewardship Program which has reduced the information they need to perform the annual assessments as to certifiability of the safety, security and reliability of the stockpile. One can hope the lesson of the last 5 years will be learned and the necessary surveillance, lab experimentation etc., will be increased and sustained for the foreseeable future. I have urged the laboratory Directors to assess the minimum conditions under which they would have the knowledge necessary to consider the certifiability of the stockpile without nuclear testing, eg., surveillance, SFI's, hydro-experiments, training on new nuclear device designs through to prototypes, etc.

Whether or not we really are at a turning point regarding the maintenance and modernization of our strategic nuclear deterrent, extended deterrent and infrastructure depends on whether or not we initiate and adequately fund programs recommended by recent studies and reports.

Safeguards. Prior to approving/ratifying past agreements and treaties; the atmospheric and threshold test bans, START I and the Moscow Agreement, Congress established, for different objectives, the activities necessary to meet the nation's commitments. The existence of those safeguards proved to be an

important factor in ensuring that subsequent administrations and Congress provided the flexibility and resilience to respond to our uncertain future. I urge that in considering New START the Senate to again specify appropriate safeguards including an annual independent assessment of DoD's nuclear delivery programs and NNSA's warhead programs, also including sufficiency of the aerospace industrial aircraft, submarine and missile infrastructure and the nuclear warhead laboratories and that infrastructure to support our nuclear deterrent into the future.

Thank you, I would welcome any questions the Committee members may have.