

**STATEMENT OF
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

BEFORE THE

**ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

New START Treaty Hearing

JUNE 17, 2010

Chairman Levin, Ranking Member McCain, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, known as “New START.”

In Prague last April, President Obama outlined a comprehensive agenda for addressing nuclear dangers in the 21st century. He pledged to take concrete steps toward a world without nuclear weapons, while maintaining the safety, security, and effectiveness of our arsenal as long as nuclear weapons exist. The President has called for reducing the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and for building a new international framework for civil nuclear cooperation, and he has promised to lead an international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years.

Building on that commitment, the President’s Nuclear Posture Review put preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to terrorists and to states that don’t already possess them at the very top of our national security agenda. The danger of a nuclear weapon falling into the wrong hands is the greatest threat facing the American people. The President has laid out an unprecedented commitment to taking real, practical and clear-eyed steps to keep the American people safe.

The New START Treaty is an important part of this nuclear security agenda. If ratified and entered into force, the Treaty will commit the United States and Russian Federation to lower levels of deployed strategic nuclear weapons in a transparent and verifiable manner. This will increase stability between our countries while demonstrating our joint commitment to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates, and Admiral Mullen are testifying to the diplomatic and security advantages of this Treaty. I want to focus on how this Treaty will allow the United States to continue to modernize our nuclear security enterprise and to maintain the scientific capabilities that ensure the safety, security, and effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent.

The success of our nuclear programs depends upon the incredible technical capabilities at the Department of Energy's national laboratories. We are proud to employ some of our nation's brightest minds and to be home to some of the world's most sophisticated scientific equipment. This equipment includes the world's fastest supercomputers and the ability to conduct the most advanced investigations of self-sustained nuclear reactions at the National Ignition Facility.

Our capabilities enable us to assess the stockpile annually, to extend nuclear weapon lifetimes, to assess other nations' nuclear capabilities, and to dismantle retired weapons. As the stockpile decreases in size, the role of science, technology and engineering in deterrence will increase in importance.

The New START Treaty will enhance, not harm, our ability to maintain the safety, security, and effectiveness of our nuclear weapons stockpile. This conclusion is based on three important considerations:

First, the Treaty supports our modernization agenda. The Nuclear Posture Review recognizes the importance of supporting "a modern physical infrastructure – comprised of the national security laboratories and a complex of supporting facilities – and a highly capable workforce with the specialized skills needed to sustain the deterrent." This month, I am delivering a detailed plan to Congress for transforming today's nuclear weapons complex into a modern, efficient and responsive 21st century Nuclear Security Enterprise. This Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan provides the multi-decade investment strategy needed to extend the life of key nuclear weapon systems, rebuild and modernize our facilities, and provide for necessary physical and intellectual infrastructure.

These modernization efforts provide a strong foundation for the limits on deployed nuclear weapons under the New START Treaty, and nothing in the Treaty will constrain these efforts. None of the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration sites – including our production and national laboratory facilities – will be subject to inspection under the New START Treaty, and none of our operations will be subject to limitation. We will be able to maintain and improve the scientific base of our nuclear weapons activities.

Second, the U.S. will remain free to determine the size of the inactive stockpile. This inactive stockpile supports stockpile maintenance, surveillance and life extension activities, including component reuse. It is an important technical and geopolitical hedge.

The weapons in the inactive stockpile will continue to be retired and dismantled consistent with Department of Defense requirements and Presidential direction, and we remain on track to meet our program requirement to dismantle all the retired warheads currently in the dismantlement queue by 2022. Nothing in this Treaty imposes any restrictions on this work.

Third, the Treaty provides the explicit right of both Parties to determine the composition and structure of their nuclear forces within the Treaty's overall limits. This means that, should a problem arise with a particular warhead type, we will have complete

flexibility to restructure our deployments and upload weapons to other systems if necessary to compensate and ensure the sustainment of an effective deterrent.

Further, the New START Treaty contains no limitations that would constrain our warhead life extension program options, or the work to assess and correct any potential future warhead issue. The New START Treaty will have no impact on any decisions regarding warhead life extension.

As was made clear in the Nuclear Posture Review, this Administration is committed to studying all of the options available for future life extension programs – including reuse, refurbishment and replacement – on a case-by-case basis. This approach has been endorsed by the directors of our three NNSA laboratories, who said, “The approach outlined in the NPR, which excludes further nuclear testing and includes the consideration of the full range of life extension options...provides the necessary technical flexibility to manage the nuclear stockpile into the future with an acceptable level of risk.”

These decisions will be based on U.S. national security and stockpile requirements, informed by our best scientific judgment and consistent with the guidance contained in the Nuclear Posture Review and the plans outlined in the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan. Nothing in the New START Treaty would limit those options in any way.

We are committed to fully funding the ongoing Life Extension Program for the W76 submarine-based warhead for completion in 2017, and the full scope LEP study and follow-on activities for the B61 bomb to ensure first production begins in 2017. We will also participate with the Nuclear Weapons Council on a study of LEP options for the W78 ICBM warhead. The New START Treaty does not place any limits on any of those programs.

I believe these factors point to a Treaty that enhances U.S. national security without jeopardizing the nuclear deterrent that helps underwrite it.

As you consider this Treaty, you can be certain that the Nation’s nuclear stockpile will remain safe, secure, and effective. I want to take a few minutes to elaborate on some of the steps the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration are taking to modernize our enterprise.

- **We are investing in science, technology, and engineering.** The Nuclear Posture Review concluded that we need increased investments to strengthen an aging physical infrastructure and to sustain scientific and technical talent at our nation’s national security laboratories. This will allow us to continue to assess and certify the stockpile without underground nuclear testing utilizing advanced scientific capabilities. The President’s fiscal year 2011 budget request would increase science funding at NNSA by more than 10 percent.
- **We are investing in the infrastructure we need.** A successful stockpile stewardship and management program requires a modernized infrastructure, including major long-

term construction projects. The highest infrastructure priorities are the construction of major new nuclear facilities for plutonium and uranium. As Administrator Tom D'Agostino and I have stated, we must replace outdated 1950s-era facilities with modern, efficient, cost-effective and properly-sized facilities.

- **We are investing in human capital.** World-class laboratories and production plants are sustained by the best and brightest minds. Through the renewed sense of urgency reflected in the President's April 2009 Prague speech and through the very challenging technical program that includes Life Extension Programs and with national security challenges beyond directed stockpile work, we are creating an environment that can attract highly-trained and motivated personnel. We must bring new scientists and engineers into this field.

We have begun this work already, but it will take sustained leadership from this Congress to see it through. The President's fiscal year 2011 budget request reflects a 13 percent increase over fiscal year 2010 and includes more than \$7 billion for weapons activities and infrastructure. The National Nuclear Security Administration's Future Years Nuclear Security Program budget includes more than \$36 billion for these activities over the next five years. Over the course of the next decade, our plans call for the investment of \$80 billion.

With Congress' support, we will transform from a Cold War capacity-based infrastructure to a modern, capabilities-based Nuclear Security Enterprise. This will provide the confidence and the tools to allow the United States to consider further nuclear weapons reductions as we work toward a world without nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, the New START Treaty will serve the interests of the United States without jeopardizing our ability to sustain the safety, security and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile. Irrespective of the Treaty, we need to invest in modernizing our enterprise and extending the life of the nuclear weapons stockpile, but we are up to this task. Together, we will ensure our ability to retain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent for as long as nuclear weapons exist.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.