

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN J. HADLEY
ON THE NEW START TREATY
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
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Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee to discuss the New START Treaty.

I would like to begin with a little historical context.

The New START Treaty is the latest step in a two-decade U.S./Russian effort since the end of the Cold War to reduce the nuclear arsenals of the two nations.

The 1992 START I Treaty permitted each country to deploy 6000 accountable strategic nuclear weapons. Because of START I counting rules for bomber weapons, this meant that each side could have about 8000 deployed strategic nuclear weapons – about a 30% reduction from the roughly 10,000 to 12,000 such weapons deployed by each side when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. As importantly, the START I Treaty established a comprehensive set of definitions, counting rules, and verification measures to increase the transparency and reduce the uncertainty associated with the nuclear activities of the two nations.

The 1993 START II Treaty effectively limited each country to between 3000 and 3500 deployed strategic nuclear weapons. This required a cut of roughly 60% from actual START I levels. Although the START II Treaty never entered into force, both countries nonetheless reduced their forces so that by 2001 each country was roughly at or approaching START II levels.

The 2002 Moscow Treaty required a further reduction of almost 40% down to between 1700 and 2200 deployed weapons. The Treaty specified a range to reflect differences in the strategic nuclear forces of the two nations. The expectation at the time was that the United States would deploy about 2200 strategic nuclear weapons while Russia would deploy about 1700.

The result of these three treaties was a cumulative reduction in the number of strategic nuclear weapons deployed by each country of over 80% from the end of the Cold War. That is a remarkable record, and the two nations have not received the credit they deserve in the context of meeting their obligations as nuclear weapon states under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The New START Treaty stands on the shoulders of these past efforts. Its principal contribution is not in making further reductions. While it reduces the limit on deployed strategic nuclear weapons to 1550, this is only a modest reduction – about 10% -- from the 1700 that Russia was expected to deploy under the Moscow Treaty. Because the counting rules under the New START Treaty attribute only 1 weapon per heavy bomber, the number of strategic nuclear weapons deployed under the New START Treaty could theoretically be higher than the number deployed under the Moscow Treaty which counted the number of weapons operationally deployed on each bomber (up to 16 or 20 per bomber for the United States and up to 6 or 16 for Russia). This fact does not in itself appear to convey an intrinsic advantage to either country. Moreover, actual deployment levels may be more driven by budget levels and modernization efforts than by counting rules.

The best case for the New START Treaty is that it replaces the set of counting rules, definitions, and verification measures that were provided by the START I Treaty until it expired at the end of 2009. Both Democrats and Republicans accepted the need for such provisions in order to build mutual confidence and allay suspicion. For this reason, in 2008 the Bush administration tabled a legally binding treaty text that retained

appropriate verification and other measures from START I but simplified to reflect post-Cold War realities and to reduce burden and cost.

As it reviews the New START Treaty, the Committee should give priority to four key issues:

First, are the definitions, counting rules, and verification measures adequate to ensure compliance with the terms of the Treaty and to rule out strategic surprise? An answer to this question must await the monitoring and verifications reviews now being conducted by the Intelligence Community and the State Department.

Second, does the Treaty permit the United States to maintain the forces it needs to safeguard its security?

-- The Moscow Treaty limited only deployed strategic nuclear weapons. The New START Treaty also limits the ballistic missiles and bombers that deliver those weapons. Will the ceilings on delivery vehicles allow the United States to deploy a robust triad of strategic nuclear forces adequate to meet our security needs?

-- The New START Treaty does not prohibit long-range conventional strike, but it does limit such systems. Conventional warheads placed on ICBMs or SLBMs will be counted as strategic nuclear warheads under the New START weapons ceiling, thus forcing a tradeoff between nuclear and non-nuclear warheads. Despite these limitations, will the United States be able to deploy the long-range conventional strike capability it needs?

-- Are there any gaps or loopholes in the Treaty that put the United States at a significant disadvantage? The one most mentioned by critics involves rail-mobile ICBMs. While such systems are not prohibited under the Treaty, and neither country currently deploys them, the Russians have done so in the past. Should the Russians do so again, critics allege that such systems would not be captured by the language of the

Treaty. This and other similar ambiguities need to be addressed, if necessary by a condition or reservation to the Treaty.

Third, to enhance deterrence, the New START Treaty needs to be accompanied by a joint commitment by the Congress and the Administration to a specific ten-year program that will recapitalize our nuclear infrastructure, modernize our strategic nuclear delivery systems, and ensure safe, secure, and reliable nuclear weapons – to include building replacement weapons if that is the best way to achieve this latter objective. At a time when other nuclear weapon states are modernizing their nuclear forces -- and Iran and North Korea are actively pursuing nuclear weapons – a failure by the United States to recapitalize and modernize is not leading by example to a non-nuclear world but gambling with our national security. I believe these concerns can be addressed by legislation developed and enacted by the Congress in parallel with the Treaty ratification process.

Finally, as part of the ratification process, the Congress and the Administration must make absolutely clear that the Treaty will not be permitted to prohibit or limit in any way what the United States might want to do on missile defense. Cold War thinking took as an article of faith that the United States and Russia could not both build ballistic missile defenses and reduce their strategic nuclear forces at the same time. Yet just five months after the United States announced its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in December 2001, Russia and the United States concluded the Moscow Treaty. The message of these two initiatives was the same: since Russia and the United States no longer presented an existential threat to each other, they now had a common interest in cooperating to make their nuclear deployments smaller, safer, and more secure – and to work together on developing ballistic missile defenses against common threats.

Regrettably, the language of the New START Treaty and accompanying Administration and Russia statements reflects a clear regression from this position by suggesting that some level of U.S. missile defenses – perhaps anything beyond even current levels -- could justify Russian withdrawal from the Treaty. Even more troubling,

the Bilateral Consultative Commission seems to have been given authority to adopt without Senate review measures to improve the viability and effectiveness of the Treaty which could include restrictions on missile defenses. The Senate in its ratification process needs explicitly to proscribe the Commission from doing so. More fundamentally, however, the Senate needs to make clear that it will not accept a return to the false offense/defense linkage of the Cold War – and that it will accept no limits whatsoever on U.S. ballistic missile defenses. Ballistic missile defense should instead become an area of strategic cooperation between Russia and the United States to counter ballistic missiles that threaten both countries.

In summary, by leading the way in addressing these and other concerns, this Committee can ensure that the New START Treaty makes its modest but nonetheless useful contribution to the national security of the United States and to international stability.

Thank you very much.

The views expressed here are my own and not those of the United States Institute of Peace.