

Statement of
Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
Staff Before the 111th Congress
Senate Committee on Foreign
Relations

Chairman Kerry, Senator Lugar, distinguished members of the Committee; I am pleased to add my voice in support for ratification of the New START Treaty.

This treaty has the full support of your uniformed military. Throughout its negotiation, Secretaries Clinton and Gates ensured that professional military perspectives were thoroughly considered. During the development of the New START Treaty I was personally involved, to include two face-to-face negotiating sessions and three telephone conversations with my counterpart, the Chief of the Russian General Staff, General Makarov, regarding key aspects of the treaty.

The Joint Chiefs and I also had time to review the analytic work done in the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) regarding the shape of future U.S. strategic nuclear forces. Its

recommendations were transmitted as guidance to the negotiating team in Geneva regarding the three central limits on strategic systems and the warheads associated with them that are contained in the treaty. In short, the conclusion and implementation of the New START Treaty is the right thing for us to do – and we took the time to do it right.

The Chiefs and I believe the New START Treaty achieves important and necessary balance between three critical aims. It allows us to retain a strong and flexible American nuclear deterrent. It helps strengthen openness and transparency in our relationship with Russia. It also demonstrates our national commitment to reducing the worldwide risk of nuclear incident resulting from the continuing proliferation of nuclear weapons.

You should know that I firmly believe that the central limits established in this treaty and the provision that allows each side the freedom to determine its own force mix provides us with the necessary flexibility to field the right future force to meet the Nation's needs. We plan to retain our Triad of bombers, ballistic

missile submarines and land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles in sufficient diversity and numbers to assure strategic stability between ourselves and the Russian Federation. We will also maintain sufficient capability to deter other nuclear states. In addition, the agreement provides for an array of important verification measures that are critical to both sides in monitoring compliance with the new treaty.

This treaty is also a critical element in the President's agenda for reducing nuclear risks to the United States, our allies and partners, and the wider international community. Our recently concluded NPR acknowledges the continuing role for nuclear weapons in the defense of America, while placing additional emphasis on positive steps to prevent nuclear terrorism and the risks from nuclear proliferation.

In summary, this New START agreement is important in itself, and should also be viewed in wider context. It makes meaningful reductions in the U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals while strengthening strategic stability and U.S. national

security. Coupled with the administration's clear commitment to prudently invest in our aging nuclear infrastructure and in nuclear warhead life extension programs, this treaty is a very meaningful step forward. I encourage the Senate to fully study the treaty. I believe you will see the wisdom of ratifying it, and I sit before you today recommending that you do so.