



Fact Sheet

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The New START Treaty: Myths and Facts

There is broad, bipartisan support among national security experts and political leaders in favor of ratifying the New START Treaty with Russia. The New START Treaty limiting the U.S. and Russia's Cold War-era nuclear arsenals is considered critical for maintaining strategic stability in our relations, enhancing the global nonproliferation regime, and, in effect, advancing U.S. security. Despite widespread consensus in favor of New START, some opponents are perpetuating unsubstantiated myths in an effort to derail ratification. This document addresses those inaccuracies and sets the record straight, ensuring that the debate is grounded in the facts.

Myth: Ratifying the New START Treaty threatens our national security.

Fact: Ratifying the New START Treaty dramatically enhances our national security in 3 specific ways: 1) New START creates stability between the two countries with over 90% of the world's nuclear weapons and re-activates inspections that help provide transparency and predictability; 2) New START helps prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear capabilities; and 3) New START bolsters our non-proliferation efforts around the world and allows us to increase pressure on countries with dangerous nuclear ambitions, such as North Korea and Iran.

1. Ratifying New START enables the U.S. to have access to the Russian's nuclear weapons complex, which provides transparency and creates stability between the two countries. The Treaty includes robust verification and inspection requirements. Inspections of Russian nuclear facilities have been suspended for over a year since START I expired in December 2009. Reinstating inspections of Russia's nuclear weapons will allow us to verify that Russia is adhering to the treaty, and to gain insight to Russia's strategic force posture. All of these measures increase transparency between our two nations, making it far less likely that an arms race could break out, and engendering trust that will allow us to work together to confront key global challenges.
2. Preventing a nuclear terrorist attack is paramount. New START's inspections and verification regime will reduce the number of actively deployed weapons and help ensure that Russia's vast and deteriorating nuclear infrastructure is safely secured. Failing to ratify New START could damage the Nunn-Lugar program's cooperative U.S.-Russian

efforts to safeguard against loose nuclear materials ending up on the black market and in the hands of terrorists and rogue states.

3. By ratifying the New START Treaty and demonstrating our commitment to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the United States will pressure other countries to improve their own nuclear non-proliferation efforts. In addition, the US will gain leverage over other countries to work with us as we continue to deal with critical nuclear threats from both North Korea and Iran.

Myth: The New START treaty will limit our missile defense program.

Fact: Pentagon officials and arms control experts attest that the New START Treaty does not constrain our missile defense plans. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June, Missile Defense Agency Director Lieutenant General Patrick O'Reilly stated, "Throughout the treaty negotiations, I frequently consulted the New START team on all potential impacts to missile defense. *The New START Treaty does not constrain our plans to execute the U.S. Missile Defense program.*"¹ Our military and civilian leaders have repeatedly testified that the language in the preamble referencing the inter-relationship between strategic offensive and defensive forces – which is based on previous treaties – is not legally binding, and neither is Russia's unilateral statement. Furthermore, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee made it absolutely clear in its resolution of ratification that the treaty would not constrain missile defense.²

Myth: Not enough is being done to "modernize" our nuclear infrastructure.

Fact: The United States has a robust modernization program in place that will strengthen and sustain our nuclear arsenal. Two years ago one might have argued that not enough was being done. But today, the Obama Administration has committed \$85 billion over the next ten years to strengthening America's nuclear weapons complex, ensuring the safety, security, and reliability of the U.S. nuclear stockpile. The President asked Congress for nearly a 10 percent increase over FY 2010 levels for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) in his FY 2011 budget request. In addition, the Administration outlined a 10-year budget for the NNSA that substantially increases funding for weapons activities and Life Extension Programs (LEPs) for the nuclear weapons stockpile. In response to requests to concerns about the commitments for certain programs, President Obama pledged an additional \$4.1 billion to be injected into the U.S. nuclear infrastructure over the next five years.

These investments will transform America's nuclear weapons complex into a modern, sustainable 21st Century Nuclear Security Enterprise. Directors of all three Department of Energy/NNSA laboratories fully endorse the Administration's commitment to ensuring that U.S. nuclear laboratories and stockpiles are state-of-the-art and sufficiently equipped. As an added measure, the Foreign Relations Committee's advice and consent resolution Condition #9 underscores the nation's commitment to building and maintaining "a robust stockpile stewardship program" and to maintaining an updated and revitalized nuclear weapons production capability.³

Myth: Verification measures in New START are inadequate.

Fact: The New START Treaty contains a strong verification regime to ensure compliance and prevent nuclear breakout. New START streamlines verification and tracking procedures using a newly created, state-of-the-art inspections system and strict reporting guidelines. Compliance and verification measures in New START build on 20 years of verification experience and appropriately reflect technological advances made since 1991, as well as improved relations between the U.S. and Russia since the end of the Cold War. New START's enhanced verification measures involve a five-pronged approach comprised of: 1) 18 invasive, on-site inspections; 2) national technical means (NTM); 3) unique identifiers placed on weapons that distinguish between deployed and non-deployed equipment; 4) regular data exchange; and 5) prompt notifications of movement of weapons. New START employs a robust and effective verification system predicated on decades of arms treaty verification experience. The verification system was expressly designed to be less complicated, less costly, and more effective than the system established by the original START Treaty. This extensive verification regime is tailored to monitor the limits of the New START Treaty while reducing, where reasonable, burdens on our own military; it enables the U.S. to quickly and accurately detect any possible Russian violations and ensure that the U.S. can rapidly and effectively respond.

Myth: It would be dangerous to agree to lower levels of strategic nuclear warheads unless Russia reduces its relatively larger stockpile of nonstrategic, or tactical, nuclear arsenal.

Fact 1: Russia's arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons do not actually give Russia a meaningful military advantage. Both Russia and the U.S. maintain arsenals of nonstrategic, or tactical, weapons – shorter-range, lower-yield weapons designed for battlefield use. Russia's retains more of these weapons than the U.S., and critics have argued Russia's arsenal is destabilizing. Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen have stated publicly, "Because of their limited range and very different roles from those played by strategic nuclear forces, the vast majority of Russian tactical nuclear weapons could not directly influence the strategic nuclear balance between the United States and Russia." General Kevin Chilton, who as Commander of U.S. Strategic Command is responsible for America's strategic deterrence mission, has explained, "Though numerical asymmetry exists in the numbers of tactical nuclear weapons the [United States] has and we estimate Russia possesses, when considered within the context of our total capability and given force levels as structured in New START, this asymmetry is not assessed to substantially affect the strategic stability between the [United States] and Russia. Furthermore, within the regional context, the [United States] relies on multiple capabilities, including its superior conventional force capabilities, tactical nuclear capabilities, U.S. strategic nuclear capabilities, ballistic missile defenses, and allied capabilities, to support extended deterrence and power projection." Even former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, when questioned by the Senate on why the 2002 Moscow Treaty did not address Russia's tactical nuclear weapons, stated for the record, "I would be perfectly comfortable having them [i.e., the Russians] have a good many more than we have, simply because of the differences in our two circumstances."⁴

Fact 2: The Administration has committed to addressing tactical arms reduction in the next, comprehensive round of U.S.-Russian talks. Secretary Clinton and Gates have explained for the record that "A more ambitious treaty that addressed tactical nuclear weapons would have taken much longer to complete, adding significantly to the time before a

successor agreement, including verification measures, could enter into force following START's expiration in December 2009." As the Resolution of Ratification passed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee states, the United States is committed to negotiations aimed at reductions and transparency that would cover all nuclear weapons – deployed and non-deployed, strategic and non-strategic. That is in part why Eastern European leaders see ratification of New START as so important to enhancing their security; as Poland's Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski wrote on November 20, our NATO Allies see "New START is a necessary stepping-stone to future negotiations with Russia about reductions in tactical nuclear arsenals, and a prerequisite for the successful revival of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE)."5

Myth: The New START Treaty could threaten continued U.S. deterrence capability.

Fact: The New START Treaty would in no way weaken the U.S. deterrent, even as other countries seek to build their nuclear capabilities. As Commander of U.S. Strategic Command General Kevin Chilton made clear in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "Under the 700 limit on deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers, and 800 limit on deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers, the US will maintain a sufficiently robust and flexible deterrent force." In support of the New START Treaty negotiation effort, U.S. Strategic Command analyzed the required nuclear weapons and delivery vehicle force structure and posture to meet current guidance and provided options for consideration by the Department of Defense. This appraisal, in the words of General Chilton, "validated both the agreed-upon reductions in the New START Treaty and recommendations in the Nuclear Posture Review." With that assessment complete, the U.S. military has strongly supported the Treaty; according to Secretary Gates, "U.S. force structure plans under New START are supported by General Cartwright, as well as by Admiral Mullen and the rest of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command General Chilton, and me."6

Myth: The New START Treaty limits Conventional Prompt Global Strike capabilities.

Fact: The New START treaty does not impede current or future conventional prompt global strike capabilities. Our military leaders have repeatedly stated that the treaty does not impair our ability to build and deploy conventionally armed ballistic missiles, if we choose to do so. Although conventional warheads on ICBMs and SLBMs will count towards the aggregate warhead limit of 1,550, this ceiling fully accommodates our plans to deploy conventional warheads on ballistic missiles and does not interfere with current and future plans for our strategic nuclear forces. As one DoD official testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "DoD has concluded that any deployment of conventionally armed ICBMs or SLBMs with a traditional trajectory, which would count under the treaty limits, should be limited to a niche capability. That's based on military considerations. The required number could easily be accounted for under the treaty's limits while still retaining a robust nuclear triad."7

Myth: The Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC) interferes with the Senate's Constitutional advice and consent responsibilities.

Fact: The BCC is not empowered to amend the main treaty text on its own, nor may it make changes to New START's protocol or annexes that affect substantive rights or obligations of the parties; it can only implement technical, non-substantive modifications to the treaty. One of the lessons from past arms control treaties is that the two sides will need to talk to one another regularly over the duration of the treaty about how the treaty is working out in practice. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has a Special Verification Commission; START had a Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission (JCIC); the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty has a Bilateral Implementation Commission. Article XII of the New START Treaty follows that tradition and establishes the BCC to promote the objectives and implementation of the treaty. It is to serve as a venue for the two sides to discuss any concerns regarding the treaty's implementation. Similar to the JCIC established in the original START Treaty, the BCC is also authorized to make minor adjustments to the Protocol and Annexes in New START. At 356 pages, the treaty is very detailed. As past experience with arms control agreements has shown, some provisions require slight modifications over the life of the agreement. Administration officials, for instance, envision the BCC making minor adjustments to provisions concerning the content and timing of notifications that are required in the treaty; while certainly important, such alterations are not substantial enough to require an amendment to the treaty that the Senate is constitutionally required to consider and vote upon.

Still, to ensure that the BCC acts accordingly and does not overstep its authority, the Foreign Relations Committee's advice and consent resolution specifically addresses the BCC in Condition #8, Understanding #1, and Declaration #6. Understanding #1 would make clear that any additional New START Treaty limitations on the deployment of missile defenses beyond those contained in paragraph 3 of Article V, including *any* limitations agreed under the auspices of the BCC, would require an amendment to the New START Treaty which may enter into force for the United States only with the constitutional advice and consent of the Senate. Condition #8 would require that, prior to any BCC meeting where the Commission will consider proposals to improve provisions in the treaty or resolve questions, the President must first brief the Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees on the nature of the material that will be addressed. Furthermore, the President must also consult with the Foreign Relations Committee in advance of any BCC meetings to determine that the BCC is the appropriate venue for addressing the change, or if an amendment to the Treaty is instead necessary, which would require the Senate's advice and consent. Declaration #6 makes clear that the Senate expects the executive branch to brief the Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees before and after each BCC meeting regarding any compliance concerns raised by the United States at the BCC meeting.

Myth: The START Treaty is a partisan issue.

FACT 1: Bilateral arms control treaties have historically passed by overwhelming margins, despite needing only 67 votes in favor of ratification. The controversial Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty passed 93-5. The original START Treaty passed 93-6, the START II Treaty passed 87-4, and the SORT (Moscow Treaty) passed 95-0.

FACT 2: Bipartisan National Security Leaders Support the New START Treaty.

Supporters of the Treaty include:

- Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, Gen. Kevin Chilton, Lt. Gen. Patrick O'Reilly, Gen. James Cartwright;
- Former President George H.W. Bush;
- All living former Secretaries of State, including: Condoleezza Rice, Colin L. Powell, James A. Baker III, George P. Schultz, and Henry A. Kissinger;
- Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, James Schlesinger, Stephen Hadley, Sam Nunn, John Warner.

Myth: The Senate Should Not Deal with New START during the 111th Congress.

Fact: The 111th Congress has fully and carefully scrutinized New START. During the 111th Congress, the Senate has held more than 15 hearings and classified briefings, with at least two dozen bipartisan witnesses. The full Senate was briefed twice on the Treaty. The Administration addressed over 900 questions for the record. Moreover, a delegation of Senators travelled to Geneva to meet with the negotiators. The Senate's bipartisan National Security Working Group received six briefings from treaty negotiators as treaty negotiations were underway. The Foreign Relations Committee conducted ten public hearings and two classified hearings on the New START Treaty. Between June 17, 2010 and August 6, 2010, the Armed Services Committee conducted five hearings and three classified briefings and the Select Committee on Intelligence also held hearings on the New START Treaty. Members of the 111th Congress have been deeply involved in examining New START and are amply prepared to vote on this treaty.

1 Statement Of LTG Patrick J. O'Reilly, Director, Missile Defense Agency, before the Committee on Foreign Relations, June 16, 2010, [p. 280](#).

2 The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, [Key U.S. Military Leaders and Influential Moderates and Republicans Strongly Support New START](#).

3 Letter to Senators Kerry and Lugar from all three Department of Energy/NNSA laboratories, [12/1/10](#); [Text of Senate Executive Report](#).

4 Responses of Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen to Questions Submitted by Senator Lugar, Committee on Foreign Relations, May 17, 2010, [p. 88](#); Responses of GEN Kevin P. Chilton to Questions Submitted by Senator Risch, Committee on Foreign Relations, June 16, 2010, [p. 301](#); Statement by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations Hearing on the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions: The Moscow Treaty, July 17, 2002, [S. Hrg. 107-622](#).

5 Responses of Secretary Gates and Secretary Clinton to Questions Submitted by Senator Barrasso, , Committee on Foreign Relations, May 17, 2010, [p. 97](#); [The Guardian, 11/20/10](#).

6 Responses Of GEN Kevin P. Chilton to Questions Submitted by Senator Risch, Committee on Foreign Relations, June 16, 2010, [p. 300](#); Responses Of GEN Kevin P. Chilton to Questions Submitted by Senator Akaka, Committee on Armed Services, July 20, 2010; Responses Of Secretary Gates to Questions Submitted by Senator Chambliss, Committee on Armed Services, June 17, 2010.

7 Prepared Statement of Dr. James N. Miller, Jr., Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Committee on Foreign Relations, June 16, 2010, [p. 272](#).