

Nuclear Security Project

The vision and steps for a safer world

July 14, 2010

The Honorable John F. Kerry, Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6225

Dear Senator Kerry:

The potential use of nuclear weapons is one of the gravest dangers the world faces. Working with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry, we have called for U.S. leadership to help build a solid consensus for reversing reliance on nuclear weapons globally as a vital contribution to preventing their proliferation into potentially dangerous hands, and ultimately ending them as a threat to the world. One important step involves the renewal of nuclear arms talks between the United States and Russia and the conclusion of the New START Treaty, signed by President Barack Obama and President Dmitry Medvedev on April 8, 2010, in Prague.

We commend you for your leadership in scheduling hearings over the past two months in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with a distinguished group of administration officials, former officials, and experts, and for your thorough and expeditious review of the New START agreement. Secretary Kissinger and Secretary Perry have both testified before the Senate in support of the New START agreement. In his testimony, Secretary Perry concluded that the New START Treaty “is a clear signal that the United States is serious about carrying out our responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty” and “improves strategic stability between the United States and Russia.” Secretary Kissinger stated, “The treaty, with its inspection and verification regime, is a significant confidence-building measure that may help lay the foundation for more constructive U.S.-Russia relations.” In other expert testimony, former Director of Central Intelligence, Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger stated, “It is obligatory for the United States to ratify” New START.

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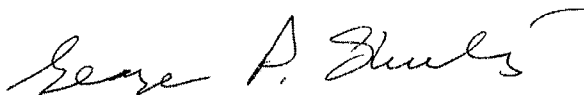
The two of us also want to make clear our support for New START and express our hope that the Committee can now move expeditiously with their report and a vote recommending New START for consideration by the full Senate. We recognize the importance of the Senate giving full consideration to the related hearings held by the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

We strongly endorse the goals of this Treaty—to achieve a near-term reduction of nuclear weapons with mutually agreed verification procedures. We believe the threat of nuclear terrorism remains urgent, fueled by the spread of nuclear weapons, materials and technology around the world. While this is a global issue, there are two countries—the United States and Russia—whose cooperation is absolutely essential in order to successfully deal with current nuclear threats. With New START, our odds of establishing a more cooperative relationship with Russia improve—recognizing this will be a process of engagement broader than any one treaty.

Noting the full support of the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and following our own review of the Treaty, we urge the Senate to give its advice and consent to ratification of New START as early as is feasible. We also urge the two governments to begin planning now for even more substantial reductions in the future involving all nuclear weapons, strategic and tactical, deployed and non-deployed.

An identical letter has been provided to Senator Lugar.

Sincerely,



George P. Shultz



Sam Nunn

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