



**Statement by Former Senator Sam Nunn  
Co-Chairman, Nuclear Threat Initiative  
The New START Treaty  
United States Senate Committee on Armed Services  
July 27, 2010**

I want to thank both the distinguished Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Carl Levin and Senator John McCain, for the opportunity to present my views on the New START agreement to the Committee. I have always believed the national security of the United States – in particular as it relates to questions surrounding nuclear weapons and arms control – is by definition a nonpartisan issue, and should be approached that way by the Executive and Legislative branches of our government. The two of you are setting an example in this regard, and I commend your leadership in scheduling hearings on the New START agreement with a distinguished group of administration officials, former officials, and experts, and for your thorough and expeditious review of the New START agreement.

As this Committee knows, the potential use of nuclear weapons is one of the gravest dangers the world faces. Working with former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger and former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry, the four of us 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 and cooperation between the United States and Russia and the conclusion of the New START Treaty.

In considering this Treaty, the bottom line for me is this: the nuclear threat has fundamentally changed since the end of the Cold War. The threat of nuclear terrorism is now 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 a wide range of security issues, including current nuclear threats. Specifically, cooperation is essential for:

1. Securing nuclear materials and preventing catastrophic terrorism
2. Energy security
3. Euro-Atlantic security
4. Stemming the spread of nuclear weapons to North Korea and Iran
5. Addressing deep instability in Afghanistan and conflict in the Middle East

6. Preventing conflict in Central Asia, and
7. A more stable and safer non-nuclear Korean peninsula.

In each of these cases, cooperation between the United States and Russia is not just important, it is vital. With New START, our odds of establishing a more cooperative relationship with Russia go up, and the odds of a nuclear weapon being used go down.

It is also essential to note that with the expiration of the 1991 START Treaty last December, there is no longer any agreement in place for monitoring strategic nuclear forces on both sides. The New START Treaty's provisions for data exchange and on-site inspection of strategic nuclear forces will provide unique and valuable information on Russian nuclear capabilities that we will not have if we do not ratify this Treaty. This information remains vitally important to the security of the United States and will increase transparency and confidence on both sides, thus enhancing predictability and stability.

I know some have expressed concerns that the New START Treaty might undermine America's missile defense program. They cite the preamble recognizing the interrelationship between strategic offensive and defensive arms; or the Treaty's prohibition on converting or using existing strategic launchers for placement of missile defense interceptors; or Russian assertions of a right to withdraw from the Treaty. Informed by my own review of the Treaty text and the detailed testimony presented on this topic before the Senate, I am reassured that New START is not a threat or a barrier to America's missile defenses, and I see little value in encouraging the Russians to think otherwise.

Another issue of concern to this Committee and the Senate is the question of maintaining the safety, security, and reliability of our own nuclear weapons. In my view, nothing in the New START agreement would in any way inhibit the ability of the United States to make the necessary investments in our nuclear weapons infrastructure and the three national nuclear weapons laboratories. Indeed, we must proceed on both fronts: reducing nuclear dangers by maintaining our deterrence, and reducing nuclear dangers through arms control. The New START agreement is consistent with this framework.

New START has been forcefully advocated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In addition to Secretaries Shultz, Perry, and Kissinger, the Treaty has been endorsed by former Secretary of State James Baker, former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, and former National Security Advisors Brent Scowcroft and Steve Hadley, who served under Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, respectively.

I urge the Senate to give its advice and consent to ratification of New START as early as is feasible. I 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.

Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain and members of the Committee, I know how important the Senate's role is in treaty ratification, and I also recognize the imperative of strong Committee leadership. I am grateful for the opportunity to present my views to the Committee and the Senate.

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