

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 28, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

As you review the future of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), we respectfully request that you consider the key factors that underpin its viability: The value of the Treaty depends on a sustained and vigorous U.S. nuclear weapons modernization program, strict compliance by Russia with its arms control obligations, and a true balance of nuclear capabilities between the parties to the Treaty.

As to the first point, the Senate declared in the New START Resolution of Ratification, “the United States is committed to proceeding with a robust stockpile stewardship program, and to maintaining and modernizing the nuclear weapons production capabilities and capacities that will ensure the safety, reliability, and performance of the United States nuclear arsenal at the New START Treaty levels.” Regrettably, the infrastructure and weapons capabilities that were pledged at the time the Senate gave its consent to the Treaty have been significantly delayed or reduced in scope. This risks further worsening of asymmetry between the Russian and U.S. nuclear weapon infrastructure capabilities.

We believe that continued funding of the U.S. strategic modernization program, including for low-yield warhead options, as proposed in your Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), is critical in the face of dangerous international security developments since the New START was ratified.

As to the second point, the Russian Federation is in material breach of its arms control commitments, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty by developing, producing, and deploying a ground-launched cruise missile and launcher. As your NPR highlights, Russia has been adopting “military strategies and capabilities that rely on nuclear escalation for their success.”

Third, in the New START Resolution of Ratification, the Senate called upon the President to pursue “an agreement with the Russian Federation that would address the disparity between the tactical nuclear weapons stockpiles of the Russian Federation and of the United States...in a verifiable manner.” We note with regret that despite the best efforts of successive presidential administrations, the Russian Federation has not been amenable to such an agreement.

In fact, Russia has increased the role of nuclear forces and their types and variety since 2010. Russia has even adopted an “escalate to deescalate” or “escalate to win” strategy for nuclear employment. The Russian Federation has unveiled new nuclear weapons that are not subject to limitations set forth by the New START, including a new nuclear-armed, nuclear-powered undersea autonomous torpedo. In addition to an extensive nuclear weapons modernization program including all legs of its nuclear triad, the Russian Federation “possesses significant advantages in its nuclear weapons production capacity,” as your NPR points out.

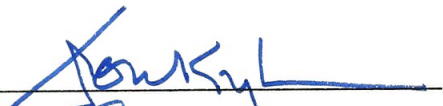
The New START does not expire until 2021. We urge you to consider the following as a part of the review of the national security interest of the United States and its allies to extend or replace the Treaty:

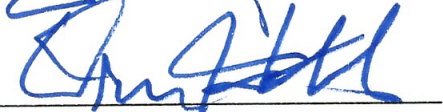
- The status of the modernization of U.S. nuclear weapons and associated infrastructure and the risk of instability created by Russia’s modernization programs;
- The imbalance posed by Russia’s nuclear weapons capabilities that are limited by arms control with Russia and those that are not, including so-called non-strategic nuclear weapons (where Russia holds at least a ten-to-one advantage over the United States) and the systems Russian President Vladimir Putin unveiled in March of this year;
- Russia’s systemic abuse of arms control and international norms; and
- The possibility of having to deal with more than one peer competitor at a time, which calls into question the limits on U.S. warheads.

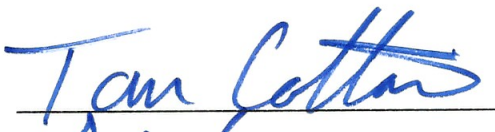
We remain committed to funding the necessary resources for the U.S. nuclear weapons modernization program and we support the rigorous review of continued viability of the New START the Administration is undertaking. We know you agree that arms control is not an end to itself; it is but a single tool that may be used to advance U.S. national security when carefully considered.

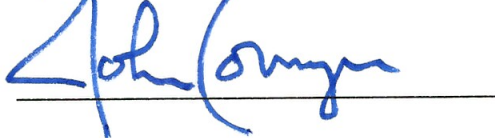
We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the review process.

Sincerely,









Pat Ash

John King
Raymond

Ray Tucker

Bob Tucker

Pat Rooney

Mike Cruz

John Hawens

Dan Sullivan

Phil

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Long Dunder

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