

## **SUPPORT ENGEL AMENDMENT ON EXTENSION OF NEW START AGREEMENT**

July 10, 2019

RE: [Support Engel Amendment \(#506\)](#) to the Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA on the Extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

Dear Member of Congress:

The 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) between the United States and Russia, which verifiably caps the number of each side's deployed strategic nuclear warheads to no more than 1,550, will expire on Feb. 5, 2021 unless the presidents of the United States and Russia extend the treaty for a period of up to five years.

We strongly urge your support for an amendment offered by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) that would express the Sense of Congress that the United States should seek to extend New START so long as Russia remains in compliance.

The amendment, which is based on the bipartisan "Richard G. Lugar and Ellen O. Tauscher Act to Maintain Limits on Russian Nuclear Forces" (H.R. 2529) originally introduced by Engel and Rep. Mike McCaul (R-Texas), would also require several briefings and reports, including an intelligence assessment of how the expiration of New START would affect the size and posture of Russian nuclear forces and the additional intelligence capabilities the United States would need to compensate for the loss of the treaty's extensive transparency and on-site monitoring provisions.

In addition, the amendment would prohibit the use of fiscal year 2020 funds to withdraw from the treaty unless Russia is determined to be in material breach of the agreement.

In response to a question earlier this year on whether he sees any reason for the United States to withdraw from New START before it expires in 2021, absent Russia being in material breach of the treaty, General John Hyten, the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), responded "No."

General Hyten also noted in testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services that he was "a big supporter of the New START agreement" and that New START provides "insights into the Russians' capabilities. Those are hugely beneficial to me."

Military and intelligence experts agree that New START provides the predictability and transparency necessary to maintain a stable nuclear deterrence posture vis-a-vis Russia. As retired U.S. Air Force Lt. General Frank Klotz, who was the head of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) from 2014 to 2018 and commander of Air Force Global Strike Command from 2009 to 2011, [wrote in an article](#) earlier this year:

"[A]s long as New START limits remain in force, Russian nuclear forces will also be constrained to current and predictable levels. Therefore, the U.S. military can assume with some

confidence that its modernization program will be adequate to the task of providing for an effective deterrent for the foreseeable future.”

Unfortunately, the Trump administration has not yet decided to pursue an extension of New START. National Security Advisor John Bolton, who is in charge of the administration’s policy review of the treaty, recently said it is “unlikely” that the White House will support extension because China must be part of the nuclear arms reduction process and Russia’s tactical nuclear weapons must be limited by a treaty.

Pursuing talks with other nuclear armed states, like China, and seeking limits on all types of nuclear weapons are worthy objectives, but such negotiations would be complex and time consuming.

There is no realistic chance a new agreement along these lines could be finalized before New START expires. The first step should be a five-year extension of New START, which would provide a foundation for a more ambitious successor agreement.

To pave the way for a U.S.-Russian decision to extend New START, it is important that the two sides promptly begin consultations on key issues raised by each side. Russia has raised concerns about the verification of the conversion of some U.S. nuclear weapons delivery systems to conventional roles. The United States, for its part, has understandably suggested that new Russian strategic nuclear weapons systems, including the Status-6 nuclear-armed, long-range torpedo and the proposed nuclear-propelled, long-range cruise missile, should be accounted for under New START.

If both sides are willing to engage in a professional dialogue relatively soon, these issues can be addressed in a mutually agreed manner either before or soon after a decision to extend New START is taken.

As former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, former Deputy Commander of STRATCOM Lt. Gen. Arlen D. Jameson (USAF, Ret.), former Sen. Sam Nunn, and the late Sen. Richard Lugar wrote in a [bipartisan letter to President Trump](#) in support of New START extension in November:

"Every American president since John F. Kennedy has successfully concluded at least one agreement with Russia to reduce nuclear dangers. Without New START, there would be no legally-binding, verifiable limits on the U.S. or Russian nuclear arsenals for the first time since 1972."

We respectfully urge you to support common-sense, verifiable limits on Russian strategic nuclear forces by voting in support of the Engel amendment expressing support for extension of New START.

Sincerely,

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Donna Barbisch,  
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