



Remarks on the US-Russian Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty

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SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. It is always a pleasure to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I thank you for your warm welcome.

I am accompanied by members of my staff, as usual, but I particularly want to single out Under Secretary John Bolton, who is here with me this morning, and who was a principal negotiator on the Moscow Treaty, and through this means, to thank John and the members of his staff, many of whom are present here, for the fine work that they did in bringing this Treaty into being.

I am pleased to appear before the Committee to seek its support for the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions, known as The Moscow Treaty, signed in Moscow on May 24, 2002.

The Moscow Treaty marks a new era in the relationship between the United States and Russia. The Treaty codifies both countries' commitment to make deep strategic nuclear weapons reductions in a flexible and legally binding manner.

The Treaty transitions us from strategic rivalry to a genuine strategic partnership based on the principles of mutual security, trust, openness, cooperation, and predictability. The Moscow Treaty is one important element of a new strategic framework, which involves a broad array of cooperative efforts in political, economic and security areas. Let me take a moment and outline for you the essential parts of the Treaty.

The United States and Russia both intend to carry out strategic offensive reductions to the lowest levels possible, consistent with our national security requirements, alliance obligations, and reflecting the new nature of our strategic relations. The Treaty requires the United States and Russia to reduce and limit our operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to between 1700-2200, each, by December 31, 2012, a reduction of nearly two-thirds below current levels.

The United States will implement the Treaty by reducing its operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to between 1700-2200 through the removal of warheads from missiles and their launchers and from heavy-bomber bases, and by removing some missiles, launchers, and bombers from operational service.

For purposes of this Treaty, the United States considers operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to be reentry vehicles on intercontinental ballistic missiles and their launchers, reentry vehicles on submarine launched ballistic missiles and their launchers on board submarines, and nuclear armaments loaded on heavy bombers or stored in weapons storage areas of heavy bomber bases. In addition, a small number of spare strategic nuclear warheads are located at heavy bomber bases. The United States does not consider these spares to be operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads. In the context of this Treaty, it is clear that only "nuclear" reentry vehicles, as well as nuclear armaments, are subject to the 1700-2200 limit.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, continues in force unchanged by this Treaty. In accordance with its own terms, START will remain in force until midnight December 5, 2009, unless it is superseded by a subsequent agreement or extended.

START's comprehensive verification regime will provide the foundation for confidence, transparency and predictability in further strategic offensive reductions. As noted in the May 24th Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship, other supplementary measures, including transparency measures, may be agreed in the future.

The Treaty also establishes a Bilateral Implementation Commission, a diplomatic consultative forum that will meet at least twice a year to discuss issues related to implementation of the Treaty. This commission will be separate and distinct from the Consultative Group for Strategic Security. This group was established by the Joint Declaration of May 24, and will be chaired by Foreign and Defense Ministers with the participation of other senior officials and will be a broader forum to discuss issues of strategic significance and to enhance mutual transparency.

The Treaty will enter into force on the date of the exchange of instruments of ratification. It is to remain in force until December 31, 2012, and may be extended by agreement of the Parties or superseded earlier by a subsequent agreement.

The Treaty also provides that each Party, in exercising its national sovereignty, may withdraw from the Treaty upon three months' written notice to the other Party.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the Moscow Treaty is fully consistent with the President's promise to achieve a credible deterrent with the lowest possible number of nuclear weapons consistent with our national security requirements. The Treaty reduces by two-thirds the number of strategic nuclear warheads available for ready use, while preserving America's ability to respond promptly to changing future situations.

These nuclear force reductions will not be accomplished within the old Cold War arms control framework; instead, the Moscow Treaty reflects the emergence of a new strategic relationship between the United States and Russia. We understand that this new relationship is still a work in progress. Russia is an emerging partner with the United States on a broad range of issues where we have increasingly shared interests and values. But Russia's relationship with the United States is not yet comparable to the relationship America has with its nuclear-armed allies, Britain and France. Russia's transformation to a democracy and a market economy still faces a number of challenges, and its interests and those of the United States may not always coincide. We understand there is work to be done if we are to fully implement the Joint Declaration. But our new strategic relationship gives us a strong foundation to stand upon -- one that will allow us to discuss our differences candidly and work to resolve them in a constructive manner.

The Congress also has an important role to play in furthering the development of our new strategic relationship with Russia. There are a number of issues where we need the Congress' help in doing our part. We need the Congress to end Jackson-Vanik's application to Russia, to authorize Permanent Normal Trading Relation status for Russia, and to waive Cooperative Threat Reduction certification requirements that are so important to the programs that Senator Lugar just spoke to. The Senate's approval of the Moscow Treaty will also make an important contribution to the strengthening of our new relationship.

Mr. Chairman, by deeply reducing strategic nuclear warheads while preserving both Russia's and America's flexibility to meet unforeseen contingencies, the Moscow Treaty will enhance the national security of both countries. I strongly recommend that the Senate give its advice and consent to its ratification at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Chairman, I have a longer statement which I would like to provide for the record, and with your permission, I would also like to add another little personal P.S. to this opening presentation.

SENATOR BIDEN: Without objection.

SECRETARY POWELL: Mr. Chairman, this is a different treaty in a different world than the world I knew so well as a soldier. Last night I was trying to remember how many times I've appeared before this committee on the ratification of a treaty, and I got lost somewhere between four and five times -- INF, CFE, START I, Protocol to PNET, Protocol to TTBT, a number of agreements that I have come up here and spoke to.

What all of those agreements had in common was that they were products of the Cold War, a reflection of the Cold War, a reflection of the world that I knew as a soldier for 35 years, a world that I could summarize for you with a little anecdote of my experience as a Corps commander in Germany.

I commanded 75,000 soldiers and I was astride the Fulda Gap, the narrowest corps area in all of NATO, from the north to the south, right in the center of Germany. I was opposed across the Fulda Gap by the 8th Guards Army of the Soviet Union, commanded by General Colonel Achalov. And Achalov knew me, and I knew Achalov. We had our pictures on each other's desks, we determined later when we got to know each other in a more informal manner.

I knew exactly what his plans were, and he knew how I would try to defend my Fifth Corps in central Germany from his attack, because his army would be followed by another army, and then a third army, and then additional armies that would come in from Russia. I only had my one Corps waiting to be reinforced by units coming from the United States.

It was a war that would be intense. It would start out conventionally, and if I did not succeed in those first few days, that first week or so, in stopping General Achalov's 8th Guards Army and the reinforcing armies behind him, then he and those reinforcing armies might reach Frankfurt, my Corps headquarters. Once they got to Frankfurt, it was an easy shot down the river to the bridges across the Rhine at Wiesbaden, and at that point NATO would have been split pretty much in half.

My plan was to defend conventionally with the two divisions and the cavalry regiment I had to the best of our ability, and we were going to give it a hell of a fight. But we fully expected that somewhere before that first week was out I would start to have to consider the use of tactical nuclear weapons in order to break up those formations that were coming at me. I had tactical nuclear weapons within my Corps. I also had plans to ask for the release of not only those weapons, but other weapons -- the GLCMs and the Pershings that we had put in there in the early '80s, knowing that sooner or later, if this continued up this horrible chain of circumstances, it could result in thermonuclear exchange of the highest order, strategic weapons going across the Atlantic to the East and coming back to the West from the Soviet Union.

It was a scenario that I had to live with, we all had to live with, we all had to work with. It was a terrifying scenario, and one that no person in his right mind, soldier or civilian, could have ever wanted to see unfold. It was a disastrous situation. We contained it. We managed it. We deterred. Both sides deterred the other. In fact, it was us who were deterring the Russians, and they thought they were deterring us -- at least that was their story, and they were sticking with it. But it was really the other way around.

After leading my Corps and then coming back and going to work for President Reagan as his Deputy, then National Security Advisor, I watched that whole world go up -- go up, just go away, with the realization that they would never defeat us militarily and they were losing economically. And so the Soviet Union came to an end. But during all those years as we tried to manage this, as we tried to contain this, it was always a matter of getting a balance of horror between the two sides. It was always a matter of matching each other -- counter-value, counterforce, tactical nukes, going to strategic nuclear exchange -- it was all a matter of managing that. So we always had to match each other in one way or another.

But then the Cold War ended, and we could do new things we never would have dreamed of. The INF Treaty was the first step in that direction, eliminating a whole class of nuclear weapons on both sides. And then we moved into START I, with significant reductions, began START II with even more significant reductions.

You may recall, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, when President Bush unilaterally got rid of all of our tactical nuclear weapons except for a fairly small number of tactical nuclear weapons retained in the Air Force. We did that in just a matter of weeks because of the new environment presented to us by President Gorbachev and the situation that existed in the early '90s.

And so the '90s came and the '90s went, and President Bush came into office. And we found a situation where Russia was anxious to be a partner, not an enemy. We found a situation where both sides still had too many nuclear weapons for the kinds of dangers that one might see out there. President Bush gathered his advisors around him and he instructed us as follows: find the lowest number we need to make America safe, to make America safe today and to make America safe in the future; don't think of this in Cold War terms, don't think in terms of how many more weapons do we have to have in order to make the rubble bounce even more.

And Don Rumsfeld and his colleagues in the Pentagon, my buddies in the Joint Chiefs of Staff and out in Omaha and the other headquarters, and the theatre commanders went to work on this, and they studied this simple proposition, this simple question posed by the President for months. And they came up with an answer in the fall of last year.

In the meantime, as Senator Lugar noted, President Bush, on the 1st of May at the National Defense University last year, gave a clear statement of his desire for a new strategic framework with the Russians that would involve strategic offensive reductions, missile defense activities, and the elimination of the ABM Treaty, which essentially was a barrier to a new strategic framework because we couldn't do missile defenses. It was a controversial speech, but it laid out a vision that really has come full circle and full flower.

In the fall, the Pentagon produced their answer: Somewhere between 1700 and 2200 strategically -- operationally deployed strategic weapons would serve US interests now and into the future; we can safely go down to that level over a period of time, while we watched a still uncertain world unfold before us.

The important thing to remember here is we didn't ask the Russians what number do you want to go to. We didn't ask the Russians or say to the Russians, "We're going to this number. Do you want to go with us?" We knew that the Russians were facing the same kind of a challenge, and President Putin had indicated informally and in some statements that he was looking at a number even lower than that, down to 1500. But it wasn't a matter of negotiation between the two sides as to what number we were going to come out at.

What President Bush said when he got the number from the Pentagon, and all of the advisors agreed to that number and said this makes sense, he said to President Putin: This is where we are going. We are going there unilaterally. Come with us, or not. Stay where you are, or not. This is what the United States needs. And it does not need it because you are an enemy; it needs this because of the nature of the world we live in, and we see you as a partner. So you can do whatever you think you have to do for your security. You can MIRV your missiles, you can keep more, you can go lower. Do what you think you need. This is what we know we need, and we are going to this level.

The Russians took all of this aboard. We had the most serious and intense discussions between the two parties. And in due course, a month after the Washington summit, President Putin responded. He responded a week or so after I had visited with him and told him that President Bush intended to announce his termination of the ABM Treaty. President Putin accepted that, didn't like it, disagreed with it, thought it was the wrong decision, but accepted it. And he said to me, "We are nevertheless going to go forward and find a new strategic framework. We don't feel threatened by your leaving the ABM Treaty."

We announced our withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and the very next day President Putin expressed his disagreement and displeasure that we had done it, said nevertheless he did not feel threatened, also said that he was anxious to develop a new strategic framework, and then matched the number by saying he too wanted to go down to 1700 to 2200.

It would have been fine if both sides had proceeded unilaterally to go to those numbers. The Russians felt strongly that if it was a new relationship, then let's make sure this relationship would exist over time, and therefore let's make this a legally binding agreement between the two nations. Let's make it last beyond one presidency. Let's make it last to some period in the future. Let's give some confidence to our people that these are the acts not just of two presidents, but of two countries, two governments. Let's have our two legislative bodies in whatever way they choose ratify this and make it binding in international law.

That's what President Putin felt was appropriate. We considered it, and President Bush, in his desire to have this kind of strong partnership with the Russian Federation and with President Putin, agreed with that proposition and instructed me and Secretary Rumsfeld and his other advisors to work to accomplish that objective.

We worked over a period of several months, as Senator Lugar and others have noted. It didn't take forever. It isn't 53 volumes thick. It was straight and it was to the point, and its simplicity is reflective of the new world we are living in. Its simplicity in that it merely says these are the levels that both of us are going to, we each have declared what this level is, and we will meet that level on the 31st of December 2012. Each of us will decide, based on our own needs, how we will get to that level, what the glide path will be. Maybe we will get to it much earlier than that. Maybe the Russians will go below it.

Each side is able to choose and each side is able to decide how they want to distribute this number. And it will be a finite number between 1700 and 2200. At some point they'll come there. Maybe it'll float in that range. But sooner or later it will be a number that settles between 1700 to 2200, and they'll decide -- each side will decide how to get there.

We have the verification provisions of START, which continue through 2009, and are subject to be extended if both sides agree to that. So the verification provisions of the original START Treaty give us a lot with respect to transparency, with respect to what's going on, with respect to consultative bodies that discuss these issues, with respect to inspections. On top of that, we've created in this Treaty a Bilateral Implementation Committee that will meet twice a year, or more often as necessary, to see how we are doing, to see what your plans are, to exchange plans, to exchange ideas, to see if we need more transparency to give us confidence. And then on 2012, on December 31st of that year, the Treaty will both go out of effect, having on that day hit the limit.

Now, it's unlikely it will unfold that way. I suspect before then we will have found out what that new limit is and we'll have worked down to it. And both sides might believe it useful to extend it beyond that ten-year period. So I wouldn't focus so much on that particular day because we have the opportunity to do more beyond that date.

It is a Treaty that I think makes sense. It is reflective of the new environment. There are things that it does not do. For example, it does not specifically eliminate warheads. No previous arms control treaty has done that. INF didn't do it. START I didn't do it. START II didn't do it, if it had come into effect. And so warhead accountability and destruction and disposition is an extremely complex matter that was not solved by previous, much more intensive arms control negotiations, and we didn't try to solve it here.

We believe that the Russians will act in the same way that we are going to act, and that is as we bring these warheads off these missiles, or take these armaments away from their bombers, we will store them securely as possible using, hopefully, even more money that we'll get from Nunn-Lugar CTR actions as the new ten, plus ten over ten, whatever else it takes to help the Russians make sure that theirs are secure. From that stockpile of secured warheads, many will be destroyed. I don't think there is any incentive on the side of either party to keep warheads that are not going to be needed either as replacement warheads, as warhead life expires, or for whatever testing may be necessary to make sure the stockpile -- non-explosive testing -- to make sure the stockpile is safe and secure, or just to make sure that you have some little hedge in case something goes wrong. But I think it will be a safer and more secure world.

The first step in the destruction of any warhead is: take it off its missile, take it off its bomber, and then secure it as tight as we can to make sure it doesn't become a proliferating problem. And then we slowly get about the task of getting rid of those that are not needed, getting rid of the cost of maintaining an inventory that we don't need. There is no incentive to keep weapons we do not need. And I think that pressure will be there, and certainly this committee and the other committees of Congress are in a position to apply that pressure.

We didn't deal with tactical nuclear weapons in this Treaty because the Treaty was not intended to do that. Tactical nuclear weapons remain an issue. Secretary Rumsfeld is particularly interested in this issue because, while we have not many left, and we have complied with what we said we were going to do on a unilateral basis back in 1991 and 1992, the Russians still have quite a few in various states of repair, disrepair, needed maintenance, and operational. And we will be pressing them in our discussions.

In the four-party discussions that I will be having with Secretary Rumsfeld and the two ministers, Ivanov, Sergei Ivanov, Defense Minister and Igor Ivanov, my Foreign Ministry counterpart, these are the kinds of issues we'll start to talk about. How can we get into the problem of theater nuclear weapons? And how do we get a handle on this issue as well?

This is more of a problem with proliferation, I would submit, than are the strategic warheads. And so all of these issues will have to be worked as part of moving forward. But this is a good treaty. It makes sense. It is reflective of the new relationship that exists between the Russians and the Americans. It should be seen in that light and not measured against the Cold War light, where everybody was trying to make sure we were absolutely in sync.

Just keep in mind, what we are doing in this treaty, we were going to do anyway. If there's something that's been gained from this treaty, as whereas we have enormous transparency because of our open system and because of Congress watching and oversighting what our Pentagon and our defense activities do with respect to these kinds of programs, it wasn't quite the same thing on the Russian side. But with this treaty, we probably have gained an opportunity for greater transparency, and get a better handle on what they may be doing and enhance predictability. So I think this is a good treaty for both parties.

Both parties get an advantage from this treaty. Both parties benefit from this treaty. But above all, the world benefits because no later than 31 December 2012, the levels that we now see will have been reduced to no more than the limits shown in this Treaty, at least a two-third reduction, and nothing prevents either side from going lower, should that be their choice.

Mr. Chairman, with that I will stop and take your questions.

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