

## **Concrete Treaty-Based Steps to Reduce the Nuclear Threat**



There is a growing bipartisan consensus that nuclear weapons are the gravest strategic threat facing the United States. The next two years represent a unique opportunity to make significant progress toward making the U.S. more secure through practical steps that will reduce the nuclear threat. In his April 2009 speech in Prague, President Obama identified the key elements of U.S. nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policy. His top priorities include pursuit of a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia and ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

This spring, President Obama will host heads of state from more than 40 nations for a Nuclear Security Summit. Its goal is to agree on a plan to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world within four years. These steps would increase U.S. security and strengthen international cooperation to reduce the risks from nuclear weapons.

### ***Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference***

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) “entered into force” and became international law in 1970. The NPT is the most universal treaty in history, with 190 signatories including the U.S. It requires non-nuclear nations that signed not to acquire nuclear weapons. In return, it obligates the nations that already had nuclear weapons “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” The U.S. Constitution enshrines treaties as the “law of the land.”

In May 2000, the U.S. and other NPT signatories agreed to 13 steps to implement the Treaty’s disarmament obligation. These steps included further reduction of U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, ratification of the CTBT, and “an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapons states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.”

NPT signatories meet every five years to review the status of the treaty. The May, 2010 Review Conference will consider strengthening nuclear non-proliferation and security measures as well as deepening disarmament commitments. The U.S can provide strong leadership to address current nuclear threats by encouraging international cooperation for arms reductions leading to a world without nuclear weapons.

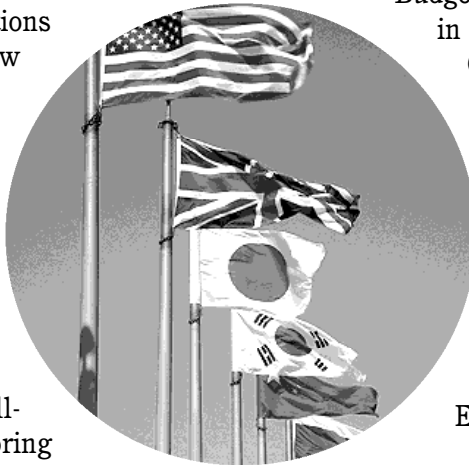
### ***Recommendations***

- The U.S. Senate should ratify the New START agreement soon after bilateral negotiations are completed.
- The Senate should ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty without attaching “Safeguards” to increase spending on the U.S. nuclear weapons research and production complex.
- The U.S. should engage in good faith negotiations towards the elimination of nuclear weapons as required by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

## ***New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)***

The U.S. and Russia possess 95% of the world's estimated 23,000 nuclear weapons. Deep reductions in their arsenals will be necessary to encourage all other states possessing nuclear weapons to negotiate reductions and elimination. The 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) expired on December 5, 2009. The U.S. and Russia are currently working on a new START treaty that would limit each side to no more than 1,675 deployed strategic warheads and between 500 and 1,100 strategic delivery vehicles. This ceiling would represent a cut of about 20% and 33% in U.S. and Russian warheads respectively. An agreement between the two governments is expected prior to the NPT Review Conference that begins on May 3. Ratification by the U.S. Senate remains uncertain.

The 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, also called the "Moscow Treaty") requires each country to reduce the number of deployed strategic warheads to no more than 2,200 by the time it expires at the end of 2012. However, SORT does not require verification measures. The new START treaty would lower the ceiling on deployed strategic warheads, reinvigorate the process of reduction, and ensure ongoing fulfillment of the verification and monitoring functions required by START. Ratification would continue legally binding, verified bilateral reductions of U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals and set the stage for further reductions.



## ***The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)***

The CTBT strengthens U.S. security and the global non-proliferation regime by banning all nuclear explosions. Without the ability to conduct full-scale nuclear weapons tests, a country seeking nuclear weapons cannot proof-test new warhead designs. Since the CTBT was opened for signature in September 1996, 182 nations have signed and 151 nations have ratified the treaty. Among the nuclear powers, the U.S. and China have signed, while Russia, France and Great Britain have both signed

and ratified. The U.S. is one of nine remaining countries that must ratify the Treaty for it to enter into force.

In December 2009, all 40 Republican senators and one Independent wrote a letter to President Obama arguing that specific plans and funding for upgrading the U.S. nuclear weapons infrastructure were necessary before a new START accord could be ratified. The 41 senators -- enough to block formal ratification of any treaty, which requires 67 votes -- stated, "In fact, we don't believe further reductions can be in the national security interest of the U.S. in the absence of a significant program to modernize our nuclear deterrent."

The Obama Administration is trying to persuade conservative Senators to vote for treaty ratification by providing a major boost to the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) budget. The FY 2011 Budget request includes the largest increase in nuclear weapons programs since the Cold War. It states "... improved NNSA capabilities will mitigate the concerns regarding ratification of the follow-on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty." The budget request provides funding for expanding U.S. nuclear weapons production capacity through new facilities and Life Extension Programs.

Vice President Biden recently stated, "As both the only nation to have ever used a nuclear weapon, ... and as a strong proponent of nonproliferation, the United States has long embodied a stark but inevitable contradiction."

The "contradiction" of calling for treaty ratification while simultaneously expanding nuclear weapons production capacity has historic precedent. In a 1999 attempt to win ratification of the CTBT, the Clinton Administration committed billions of dollars to weapons development and manufacturing through the Stockpile Stewardship Program. The CTBT vote failed in the Senate, while the National Laboratories walked away with massive permanent increases in their budgets. There is no reason to believe the outcome will be any different this time.