

Dick Lugar

U.S. Senator for Indiana

Date: 07/15/2010 • <http://lugar.senate.gov>
Andy Fisher • 202-224-2079 • andy_fisher@lugar.senate.gov

Opening Statement for Hearing on the New START Treaty

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing.

Today, the Committee holds its eleventh hearing on the New START Treaty. I join the Chairman in welcoming this distinguished panel of weapons experts. As I said this past January in a speech to the Conference on Strategic Weapons in the 21st Century, the work of our National Laboratories in science and stockpile stewardship is indispensable to our national security. In addition to ensuring that our nuclear weapons are safe, secure, and reliable, our laboratories also serve as engines of innovation that we hope will provide new technologies to tackle the vast array of energy, environmental, and medical challenges facing our nation and the world.

This hearing is unique because, as our witnesses will make clear, the New START Treaty will not affect the mission of our laboratories. The Treaty explicitly states that "modernization and replacement of strategic offensive arms may be carried out." The management of both deployed and non-deployed warheads will not be fundamentally altered by entry into force of the New START Treaty.

Yet our consideration of New START has intensified a debate on modernization and stockpile stewardship programs, in which our National Laboratories play a central role. The three National Laboratories represented today form the core of the United States nuclear weapons complex. Collectively, they must certify annually to the President and the Congress that our nuclear weapons are safe, secure, and reliable.

Near the end of the last Administration, a consensus developed that more needed to be done to ensure the vitality of our nuclear weapons complex, even as a framework for a successor to START I was sought. As Secretary Gates stated in his 2008 speech at the Carnegie Endowment "We'll lead the way in reducing our arsenal, but we must always hedge against the dangerous and unpredictable world."

The Obama Administration's Nuclear Posture Review appears to set a high bar for replacement of our nuclear weapons. The NPR states that, in considering any decision on engineering development for our weapons, the Administration will give "strong preference" to options for refurbishment or reuse, and that replacement would occur only if "critical Stockpile Management Program goals could not otherwise be met, and if specifically authorized by the President and Congress."

Reinvestment in our nuclear stockpile will require substantial planning and funding. The Administration's Fiscal Year 2011 budget request includes \$624 million in increases for atomic energy defense activities. This is a welcome start to a longer process of budgeting and reinvestment. These plans were laid out in broad terms in the report submitted to Congress under section 1251 of last year's Defense Authorization Act. This is a good plan that should be executed.

I look forward to engaging with our three Laboratory Directors today. I hope to hear from them how the plans and budgets reported to the Senate are sufficient to maintain confidence in our nuclear weapons stockpile and the infrastructure that supports them.

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