

News from Senator

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SENATE ARMS CONTROL OBSERVERS HAIL START OF NEW TALKS

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND -- The U.S. Senate Arms Control Observers Group today hailed the beginning of the new U.S.-Soviet negotiations on nuclear and space arms as "an important first step on a road we hope will lead to a more stable and secure strategic balance." Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kans.) and Senate Minority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), as ex officio members, led the observer group to the opening of the talks.

The Senate passed a resolution introduced by the two Senate leaders on January 3, 1985, establishing the group. Co-chairmen of the group are Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), and Senator Claiborne Pell, (D-R.I.). Other members include: Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.)*, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.)*, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), Senator Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), Senator John Warner (R-Va.), and Senator Don Nickles (R-Okla.).

In accordance with the Senate's constitutional role to advise and consent, the group will help keep the Senate informed of the progress of the negotiations and respond to requests by the administration for advice on the conduct of the negotiations. The Senators will not function as negotiators.

Secretary of State Shultz wrote to the group on January 5, 1985: "I welcome this step by the Senate, which I believe can facilitate and enhance our consultative process and help establish the kind of unity which our nation needs as we approach this issue of such great importance."

In addition, Secretary Shultz has expressed the view that the group's input into the process will help the administration develop arms control positions that will enjoy wide bipartisan support with the American people and the Congress.

At a press conference held at the International Conference Center, the group stated its long-term objective: "to avoid a recurrence of the problems of the 1970's, when three successive arms control treaties, signed by three different presidents, were never approved for ratification by the Senate."

The Senators pledged to fulfill their responsibilities as official observers on the U.S. Delegation "on the basis of the national interest of the United States without regard for partisan consideration."

The group commended the President for his commitment to make arms control one of the highest priority goals of his second administration and urged him to conduct these talks "with creativity and flexibility consistent with the security requirements of the United States and its friends and allies."

A copy of the joint statement is attached.

*Senators Wallop and Moynihan will not be attending this preliminary session, but will be attending subsequent negotiations.

JOINT STATEMENT

U.S. SENATE ARMS CONTROL OBSERVERS GROUP

As the new negotiations on nuclear and space arms open today here in Geneva, we believe that the United States and the Soviet Union are taking an important first step on a road we hope will lead to a more stable and secure strategic balance. We recognize that these negotiations will be enormously complex and difficult, and that great patience will be required on the part of the two Governments and their publics. As officially-designated Observers on the U.S. Delegation, we are prepared to assist in this process for as long as it takes to achieve an equitable and verifiable agreement that enhances our national security and lessens the risk of nuclear confrontation.

As noted in a resolution introduced by Senators Dole and Byrd and passed unanimously by the Senate on January 3, we commend President Reagan for his commitment to make arms control one of the highest priorities of his second term of office and urge him to approach these talks with creativity and flexibility consistent with the security requirements of the United States and its friends and allies. If the negotiations are to succeed, it is equally important that the Soviet Union engage in good faith bargaining in a genuine effort to find a common ground that promotes both sides' security interests.

At the outset of these negotiations, we want to emphasize our concern over Soviet violations of existing arms control agreements and understandings. Discussion of compliance issues is properly conducted in the U.S./Soviet Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) or, if required, through high-level diplomatic channels. Nonetheless, the Soviet Union must understand that if it genuinely wants these new talks to produce an agreement that can be ratified and entered into force, it must be far more forthcoming in responding to U.S. demarches on the violations issue and in halting prohibited strategic activities.

As Observers on the U.S. Delegation, we intend to discharge our responsibilities on the basis of the national interest of the United States without regard for partisan considerations. We look forward to remaining closely involved in the negotiations and stand ready to offer such counsel to the administration as may be useful when major changes are being considered in U.S. negotiating positions. Our long-term objective is to avoid a recurrence of the problems of the 1970s, when three successive arms control treaties, signed by three presidents, were never approved for ratification by the Senate.