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**NEWS
FROM:**

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER



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START II

SENATE GIVES APPROVAL TO START II TREATY WITH CONDITIONS; DOLE STATES START II ACTION NOT LINKED TO ABM TREATY; MISSILE DEFENSE REMAINS TOP PRIORITY

The Senate is about to vote on the START II treaty. START II is an example of the bipartisan way in which foreign and defense policy should be conducted. President Bush negotiated it and President Clinton is seeking the Senate's advice and consent.

In response to those who are now saying that the Senate is rushing into giving its advice and consent to this treaty, I would point out that this treaty came to the floor and is being considered under the provisions of several unanimous consent agreements reached over the course of the past two months.

The Senate Arms Control Observer Group worked on a package of conditions and declarations to the resolution of ratification which were agreed to prior to Christmas. These conditions and declarations will not require any changes to the START II treaty, however they are the binding terms under which the Senate gives its advice and consent to this treaty.

Duma Must Ratify Before U.S. Implements Treaty

START II has received widespread bipartisan support because, if faithfully implemented by both the United States and Russia, it is in the U.S. interest. The treaty provides for further reductions in U.S. and Russian missiles and warheads. These reductions will be stabilizing because the treaty also, and most importantly, provides for the de-MIRVing of land-based missiles and the elimination of heavy ICBM's such as the Russian SS-18. These were U.S. arms control objectives throughout the Reagan and Bush administrations. Unquestionably, de-MIRVing and eliminating heavy ICBM's are the principal benefits of START II.

We must keep in mind that the Russian Federation must still take a number of actions to make the START II treaty a reality. First, the Russian Duma must offer its consent to ratification. The prospects for such action are more uncertain after the recent elections -- since Communists and extreme nationalists now represent more than a third of the Duma. Furthermore, the Russians and the Clinton administration must firmly commit not to backtrack on START II provisions. There is already talk of "alleviating" some of START II's "burden" on Russia in a follow on agreement. We will need to carefully watch out for the so-called nuclear summit next spring and its possible results.

I would like to comment on the conditions and declarations to the resolution of ratification unanimously agreed to by the Senate on December 22. These address the strategic environment in which this treaty will operate and which it will help shape.

Change in Strategic Environment

The fact is that the strategic environment has changed since President Bush negotiated START II. In particular, the threat of the proliferation of ballistic missiles has sharply escalated. When, on June 17, 1992, Presidents Bush and Yeltsin agreed upon the foundations for START II, they also issued a joint statement on a global protection system endorsing U.S.-Russian cooperation on missile defenses. Since the beginning of the Clinton administration, however, talks on this idea have lapsed and our national missile defense program has languished.

Today, I would urge President Clinton once again to resume these discussions with Russia on cooperation on defenses. Let us recall that it was President Yeltsin who called for such cooperation in his January 29, 1992 speech to the United Nations. Let us see what might be possible, while recognizing that talking does not give Moscow a veto over our programs.

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Move Forward on Missile Defenses

The Congress provided clear direction and substantial additional funding for missile defense programs. Unfortunately, President Clinton vetoed the Defense Authorization Bill the first time around, precisely because it set out a course toward providing a national missile defense system.

In my view -- with russian cooperation or without -- it is high time to move forward on a missile defense system which protects America -- from Alaska to Florida, and Hawaii to Maine. Included in the package of amendments we have adopted is a declaration which states that missile defenses are necessary and complementary to START II reductions.

Support for START II Not Reaffirmation of ABM Treaty

And so, as we give advice and consent to the START II treaty we must be crystal clear: our vote in favor of START II is not in any way a reaffirmation of the ABM treaty. Conversely -- for those who would argue that the Senate should not give its advice and consent to the START II treaty -- withholding our consent to START II does not in any way affect the terms of the ABM treaty or how the administration applies these terms.

One of the binding conditions the Senate has approved unequivocally states that nothing we do here in any way alters our rights and obligations under the abm treaty. In other words, we can propose changes to the ABM treaty or, if necessary, withdraw from the ABM treaty in order to defend America.

Condition Offered by Dole

There are a few other pieces of the bigger picture we must keep in mind, including political developments in Russia. The amendment I offered -- which was included in the manager's package -- is a condition to the resolution of ratification which stipulates that the United States will not be legally bound by the START II treaty if the Russian Federation does not ratify it. Furthermore, the condition requires the president to consult with the Senate if he decides to make reductions in our strategic forces below those currently planned. In that event he must also certify that such reductions are in the U.S. national security interest.

With respect to concerns about treaty compliance, it is no secret that Russian generals and politicians are saying openly and privately that they will not implement the START II treaty if ratified. Let us not forget that the track record of compliance the former Soviet Union and Russia is seriously marred. The Soviet Union claimed to hold the ABM treaty sacrosanct, but, wantonly violated it. For a long time, we have been worried about Soviet and Russian violations of the biological weapons convention. And, at present, Russia is in violation of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty. One of the declarations to the resolution of ratification addresses the concern of potential violations to START II and requires the administration to brief and report regularly on Russian compliance with START II.

Finally, we can reduce our missiles and nuclear weapons to START II levels. But we need to preserve the reliability, safety and security of the strategic weapons we retain. The United States needs to develop a new post cold war nuclear doctrine in this era where we are faced with multiple threats from different regimes. It may be time to update our aging nuclear force with new weapons designs.

Must Ensure Safety & Reliability of Nuclear Deterrent

The Clinton administration is dismantling our nuclear weapons infrastructure and driving us towards a comprehensive test ban. Meanwhile, Russia is spending scarce resources on strategic modernization and updating its nuclear doctrine to include potential use against former Soviet states. I am pleased that one of the declarations included in the resolution of ratification speaks to the need to ensure the safety, reliability, and performance of our nuclear forces -- which are and will remain, the cornerstone of our deterrent.

I would like to remind my colleagues that it was the Bush administration which negotiated START II. And START II, like the first START treaty, was an outgrowth of the strategic arms reduction goals set by the Reagan administration. But, strategic arms control -- under both the Bush and Reagan administrations was part of a smart, judicious and comprehensive approach to our national security -- not the centerpiece of U.S. national security policy. Since the Clinton administration came to office, there has been an overreliance on arms control and a penchant for clinging to outdated cold war era thinking.

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Missile Defense Top Priority

I am amazed at this administration, as well as some of my colleagues, and Moscow for their willingness to link the START II treaty with the antiquated and hopelessly outdated Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. Missile defense for America must be priority one at a time when ballistic and cruise missiles are coming into the possession of more and more countries. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, the North Koreans are currently working on a missile that will be able to hit Alaska and Hawaii. Iran, India, and others are also working on their own programs. Missile defense is not a threat to the Russians. It offers protection to us -- and potentially to the Russians -- during a time when the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is escalating.

I support START II. However, the Clinton administration and Moscow must not backtrack on de-MIRVing missiles and getting rid of the heavy SS-18's. The Clinton administration must also support the restoration of our aging nuclear infrastructure -- almost two-thirds of which dates from before the mid-1970's. The president must also seek the strictest compliance from a Russia which is changing -- and given the Duma elections, not for the better. Especially in light of the recent Russian elections, we must safeguard at all costs against unilateral U.S. Implementation of START II. Furthermore, I urge the Clinton administration to join the Senate to reiterate -- loudly and clearly -- the traditional U.S. position: START II and the ABM treaty are in no way linked. START II is a good treaty for us and Moscow, but it should not -- and must not -- be used to keep us from pursuing a national missile defense system.

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