After New START, What's Next?
Remarks at 3rd Annual "Nuclear Deterrence Summit"

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Arms Control Association Executive Director Daryl G. Kimball discussed what's next after New START yesterday at the 3rd Annual "Nuclear Deterrence Summit," in Crystal City, VA. Below are his prepared remarks:

After New START, What's Next?  It's a pleasure and honor to appear once again at the Nuclear Deterrence Summit. Once again Ed Helminski and his Exchange Monitor Publications team have assembled an impressive lineup of speakers and we're glad to be able to be part of this important dialogue. The organizers have asked me to address what can and should be done to reduce nuclear dangers now that the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) has been approved. First, it is important to recall what the Obama administration has said it would do and recall what it has done so far. Over its first two years, the Obama administration has been extraordinarily busy pushing a number of concrete steps to reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons, end nuclear testing, secure fissile material, and strengthen compliance and implementation with the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. In April 2010 the administration completed a new Nuclear Posture Review that somewhat narrows the role of U.S. nuclear weapons and rules out the need for new types of warheads. Later that month, Obama hosted the historic international Nuclear Security Summit that produced an action plan securing the most vulnerable materials within four years. In May, the U.S. led the 2010 NPT Review Conference to a successful conclusion with a 64-point action plan, negotiated, and hosted the historic nuclear security summit. At the UN, the administration pushed through a tougher set of targeted sanctions on Iran and North Korea in response to the NPT safeguards violations, which have improved U.S. and P-5 leverage vis-à-vis Iran, somewhat hindered Iran's enrichment capabilities and bought some time for the pursuit of a deal to establish some reasonable and more verifiable limits on the Iranian program to ensure it is not used to produce weapons. Among the biggest, if not the biggest achievements is New START. The President and his team negotiated the treaty with the Russians within a year, and then with the support of key Republican leaders successfully turned back treaty-killing amendments that would have required renegotiation with Russia and won bipartisan Senate support for the treaty and New START won 71-26 because it increases U.S. security. Put simply it sets new, modestly lower limits on Russian and U.S. deployed warheads and delivery systems and re-establishes a robust, up-to-date monitoring system to verify compliance. In fact, New START will increase predictability and transparency through enhanced on-site inspections that will provide more information on the status of Russian strategic forces than was available under the original START accord. New START has already helped reset U.S.-Russian relations and boosted U.S.-Russian cooperation to contain Iran's nuclear program and secure vulnerable nuclear material, and of course it opens the way for further Russian and U.S. nuclear arms reductions. New START is just a START By any measure, there has been considerable progress toward the goal of the United States' longstanding goal—as reiterated by the President in Prague in 2009—of peace and security of a "world without nuclear weapons." But New START and these other initiatives are just that—a start. There is much more that needs to be done to reduce the nuclear weapons danger. So, what comes next? Deeper nuclear reductions: New START is vital, but it will leave the United States and Russia with far more strategic warheads and strategic missiles and bombers than is needed to deter nuclear attack. In fact, even after New START, there will still be roughly 19,000 nuclear weapons worldwide, most of which are held by the United States and Russia. I think President Obama and his team have it right when they say the United States and Russia can and should pursue further verifiable reductions of all types of nuclear weapons—strategic and tactical, deployed and non-deployed. Informal, early discussions are now underway. We believe the two sides can and should initiate formal talks before the end of this year. The goal should be to establish a single, verifiable limit on the total number of nuclear weapons for each nation. This overall limit would be in addition to a
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Sublimits on the number of deployed strategic weapons. Establishing such an approach is important given that as strategic deployed arsenals shrink, nondeployed and nonstrategic warheads and their delivery systems have to be addressed. It is also important that the nuclear arms control process establishes a simple unit of measure that can be applied to future efforts for transparency, accounting, and ultimately controls and reductions involving all nuclear-armed states. How low can U.S. and Russian negotiators go in the next round? From a geostrategic standpoint, neither Russia nor the United States need a total stockpile of any more than 500 to 1,000 nuclear warheads (including both strategic and tactical and deployed and non-deployed) to deter nuclear attack by any current or potential adversary. 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear weapons far outstrips any realistic deterrence requirements. ACA published a study in 2005, "What Are Nuclear Weapons For?" that outlines the rationale for such a smaller "500+500" U.S. nuclear force of deployed strategic and nondeployed strategic warheads on a smaller, mainly submarine-based triad. In an article in the Sept.-Oct. issue of Foreign Affairs others have also argued that it is possible to get down to 1,000 warheads without weakening security on either side. Of course there is the intriguing article in Strategic Studies Quarterly that concludes that the United States could "drawdown its nuclear arsenal to a relatively small number of survivable, reliable weapons dispersed among missile silos, submarines, and airplanes." Those authors argue that such a force might number only 311 nuclear weapons. Other than Russia, no other nuclear-armed adversary possesses more than 40 nuclear weapons on strategic missiles. Clearly we can go lower. For Russia such a negotiation would help address its concerns about the relatively larger U.S. upload potential that exists due to our larger number of delivery systems and reserve strategic warheads. For the United States, such a negotiation would finally lead to an accounting and reduction of Russia's relatively larger and possibly insecure stockpile of stored and deployed tactical nuclear bombs. Such reductions should, ideally, be secured through a follow-on treaty with robust verification methods. However, given that the next round of talks will likely be more complex and time consuming, there are other nuclear risk reduction steps that should be pursued at the same time. For example:

- The United States and Russia can achieve the reductions mandated by New START ahead of the 2018 implementation deadline; and

- President Obama needs to make good on promises to phase-out obsolete Cold War nuclear targeting plans and prompt launch requirements, which help perpetuate excessive deployments and raise the risk of catastrophic nuclear miscalculation. In a September 2009 Q & A published in Arms Control Today, then-candidate Obama said: "Keeping nuclear weapons ready to launch on a moment's notice is a dangerous relic of the Cold War."

The NPR recommends calls for taking measures to maximize the time the Commander-In-Chief has to make a decision to use nuclear weapons. A reliable and credible U.S. nuclear deterrent does not require the ability to retaliate immediately but only the assurance that U.S. nuclear forces and command-and-control systems would survive an attack. Now is the time to implement these steps. The Obama administration and along with NATO must also work through two other issues that could complicate further, deeper U.S.-Russian nuclear force reductions. First, Russia is and will likely remain resistant to meaningful limits on tactical nuclear weapons so long as the U.S. continues to deploy even a small number of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. As the new NATO Strategic Concept and U.S. military commanders acknowledge, these weapons have no military role in the defense of NATO. Some may believe these weapons have a function as a bargaining chip or are symbols of the United States commitment to NATO. Whether they are or are not, they are clearly obsolete relics of the Cold War. To clear the way for a potential agreement with Russia on reciprocal measures to account for and reduce tactical nuclear weapons, the United States should, in the context of the ongoing NATO deterrence review, agree with our NATO partners to eliminate any formal alliance requirement for U.S. tactical nuclear warheads to be stationed in Europe. Second, Washington and NATO must work with Moscow to achieve meaningful U.S.-Russian cooperation on strategic ballistic missile defense. Otherwise, future deployment of large numbers of U.S. interceptors with nominal strategic capabilities could undermine the
prospects for future nuclear reductions and exacerbate East-West tensions. New START sidesteps long-standing U.S. and Russian tension over strategic missile defense, but the next agreement cannot avoid the realities of the offense-defense relationship. Contrary to the view that Obama has abandoned strategic missile interceptors in Europe to placate Russia, the administration shelved the untested and unproven Bush-era Ground-based Mid-Course system mainly because its effectiveness was extremely limited and because Iran is still years away from fielding long-range missiles. Clearly the new U.S. "phased, adaptive approach" for missile SM-3 interceptors over the next decade provides a better, though still limited, capability to address Iran's short- and medium-range missile threats as they emerge. For now, it does not threaten Russia's strategic nuclear retaliatory potential. The approach creates the potential for cooperation rather than confrontation with Russia. However, unless there is meaningful U.S.-Russian cooperation on strategic ballistic missile defense, future deployment of large numbers of U.S. interceptors will provide only nominal strategic capabilities against Iranian missiles while increasing Russia's determination to deploy larger numbers of more capable ICBMs. **CTBT and FMCT:** Not only must the United States and Russia further reduce their arsenals, they must work harder to prevent other states from building up and improving their nuclear arsenals. To succeed, the United States needs to revive efforts for a global ban on fissile material production for weapons and solidify the global moratorium on nuclear test explosions by ratifying the CTBT. In April 2009, President Obama called for reconsideration and ratification of the CTBT and put into motion technical studies to update the case for the treaty, one of which—from the National Academies of Science—will soon be published. It is time to take another, sober, fact-based look at the CTBT and it is time that the Obama administration seriously engage the Senate on the subject so that the Senate can reconsider and vote on the treaty at the appropriate time—something they have not yet done. Today, the national security case for the test ban treaty is even stronger than it was when the Senate considered it in 1999. Nearly two decades after the last U.S. nuclear test explosion, it is clear that the United States no longer needs or wants nuclear testing and further testing by other states—including China, India, Pakistan, or someday, Iran—could help improve their nuclear capabilities. We are essentially abiding by the requirements of the CTBT without accruing the nonproliferation and security benefits. Reasonable Senators should be able to understand that logic and be able to understand that the old arguments against the CTBT no longer hold water. As former Secretary of State George Shultz said in 2009, "Republican Senators might have been right voting against the CTBT some years ago, but they would be right voting for it now." For instance, on June 4, 1992, Rep. Jon Kyl, spoke in opposition to the proposal to establish a 9-month U.S. test moratorium to match the Soviet moratorium. He argued: "... as long as we have a nuclear deterrent, we have got to test it in order to ensure that it is safe and it is reliable." The same argument was against the CTBT in 1999. Now we know that argument is just not correct. Over the past decade, the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) life extension programs have successfully refurbished existing types of nuclear warheads and can continue to do so indefinitely. On December 1, the directors of the three U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories wrote that they are "very pleased" with the $85 billion, 10-year plan to maintain the U.S. nuclear stockpile and modernize the weapons complex. The said the funding plan provides "adequate support" to sustain the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The lab directors' endorsement should put to rest any lingering doubts about the adequacy of U.S. plans to ensure a safe, secure and reliable nuclear stockpile under the CTBT. Senators of both parties should also recognize that delaying reconsideration of the Test Ban Treaty will create uncertainty about U.S. nuclear policy and jeopardize the fragile political consensus to increase funding to maintain the U.S. nuclear stockpile in the years ahead. By any commonsense definition, the U.S. nuclear weapons complex already has the necessary resources to maintain the shrinking U.S. nuclear arsenal. Even if the new Congress reduces some of the requested additional funding for the NNSA weapons complex there is more than enough funding for the NNSA and the nuclear weapons labs sustain core programs necessary to maintain and refurbish the existing warhead types. And I would also caution those who might seek even greater funding for new projects and facilities—such as "scaled experiments," which is the subject of a forthcoming JASON study—that projects not in the Obama administration "Section 1251" report on upgrading the weapons complex will be hard to justify, particularly in today's tight budget environment. In 2009, Obama also pledged to "lead a global effort" to negotiate a verifiable FMCT, but talks at the 65-nation Conference on
Disarmament (CD) remain blocked due to opposition from Pakistan, which is locked in an arms race with India. If talks at the CD do not begin soon, the Obama administration should pursue parallel, open-ended talks involving the eight states with fissile material production facilities that are not legally required to be under international safeguards. Even if talks do begin, they will likely drag on for years. To hasten progress, the Obama administration should be prepared to act more boldly by proposing that all states with facilities not subject to safeguards should agree voluntarily to suspend fissile material production pending the conclusion of the FMCT. **Conclusion** These next steps will not be easy but nothing in this business ever is. The American people expect their leaders to take action to reduce the nuclear weapons threat. Doing nothing or delaying action on pragmatic nuclear risk-reduction steps is not an option. Thank you.

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