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Testimony

Joint Hearing
House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism,
Nonproliferation, and Trade
House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

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Chairmen Poe and Rogers, Ranking Members Sherman and Cooper, distinguished Members of the House Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees. Thank you for hosting this hearing and for having me here today.

Today, I want to speak to you about:

- 1) why arms control agreements with Russia continue to be an important tool to enhance the security of the United States, our allies, and partners;
- 2) the seriousness with which the Administration takes compliance with arms control agreements; and
- 3) U.S. efforts to ensure Russian compliance with its arms control obligations.

As has been recognized for over four decades, verifiable arms control agreements can enhance the security of the United States, our Allies, and our partners. It is one of the many diplomatic, military and economic tools that the United States uses to address 21st Century challenges. We have worked closely with our Allies and partners to develop the arms control framework we have today. The United States and its allies are made safer and more secure by such agreements as they limit weapons and their destructive potential for all parties to the agreement, while providing transparency and predictability. The Obama Administration has continued the longstanding bipartisan approach to arms control with Russia that had its origins in the days of the Cold War. The administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush were the architects of many of our most successful and enduring arms control efforts.

Our overall approach to strategic stability with Russia remains unchanged since the Cold War: the United States is committed to maintaining strategic stability between the United States and Russia. This is because it is, without a doubt, in the national security interest of the United States and our allies to do so.

That said, Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine, increasingly confrontational posture, and violations of the INF and CFE Treaties have undermined trust and must be addressed. While diplomacy between the United States and Russia continues, no one can ignore that Russia's actions have undermined the very principles upon which cooperation is built. Further, as we consider arms control priorities this year or in any year, we will continue to consult closely with our allies and partners every step of the way. Our security and defense, as well as that of our allies and partners, is non-negotiable. We will only support arms control agreements that advance our national security interests.

During the Cold War, Washington and Moscow found it in our mutual interest to work together to limit or ban certain systems, and to cap and then to begin to reduce the number of nuclear weapons to reverse the nuclear arms race and improve mutual security and stability. For the same reasons, we judged that the New START Treaty was in the U.S. national security interest, and we continue to judge that the New START Treaty remains in the U.S. national security interest today. We are now in the fourth year of implementation and, despite the crisis in Ukraine, we and Russia continue to implement the Treaty in a business-like manner. Furthermore, as outlined in our 2014 New START Treaty Implementation Report, the Russian Federation is in compliance with its obligations under the New START Treaty.

Since New START entered into force in 2011, the United States has inspected—with boots on the ground—Russian nuclear weapons facilities 70 times. Moreover, the United States and the Russian Federation have exchanged more than 7500 notifications on one another's nuclear forces in the last four years. These notifications provide predictability by enabling the tracking of strategic offensive arms from location to location, giving advance notice of upcoming ballistic missile test launches, and providing updates of changes in the status of systems covered by the Treaty. For example, a notification is sent every time a heavy bomber is moved out of its home base for more than 24 hours. Additionally, when either party conducts a flight test of an ICBM or SLBM, they are required to notify the other party one day in advance.

The Treaty's verification mechanisms allow us to monitor and inspect Russia's strategic nuclear forces to ensure compliance with the Treaty. For both the United States and Russia, accurate and timely knowledge of each other's nuclear forces helps to prevent the risks of misunderstandings, mistrust, worst-case analysis, and worst-case policymaking. Put another way, the New START Treaty's verification regime is a vital tool in ensuring transparency and predictability between the world's largest nuclear powers. During times of heightened tensions overall, such predictability and transparency only becomes more important.

In the realm of conventional arms control, the United States and our Allies have been using arms control and confidence building mechanisms in an effort to promote stability in Europe, provide transparency on Russia's provocative actions in and around Ukraine, and assure our allies and partners in the face of Russian aggression. For example, the Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures has been used by our Allies and partners – and by the United States – to gain insight into Russia's military actions. Vienna Document inspections provided a near-continuous presence in Ukraine from March through June of this year, providing reassurance to Ukraine and insight into the situation on the ground, particularly in the weeks before the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission was in place.

Additionally, the United States has worked with NATO Allies and other Open Skies Treaty partners to conduct observation flights over western Russia and additional flights over Ukraine in order to provide reassurance to Ukraine and gain insight into reported Russian military activity.

We believe these arms control mechanisms have great importance not only in providing insight and transparency into Russian actions in and around Ukraine, but demonstrating support for our allies and partners. More broadly, such mechanisms contribute to greater transparency and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region.

I want to underscore that our NATO allies and other partners in Europe are strong supporters of arms control and confidence building mechanisms in Europe and they count on our active participation and leadership in those efforts.

And furthermore, when Russia – or any other nation – does not uphold its arms control obligations, we hold them accountable. For example, Russia ceased implementation of its Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) obligations in December 2007. After two intensive diplomatic efforts to break the impasse and encourage Russia to resume implementation, in November 2011, the

United States responded to Russia's violation of its obligations by suspending U.S. performance of certain obligations under the CFE Treaty as to Russia. We were joined by our NATO Allies that are party to the Treaty, as well as Georgia and Moldova, in taking this step – in all, 24 of the 30 countries that are party to the Treaty have suspended implementation of certain CFE obligations with Russia.

So, let me assure this committee that the Administration takes compliance with all arms control agreements extremely seriously. For this reason, this Administration worked hard to produce a compliance report in July of 2010 – the first delivered to Congress after a five year lapse – and has produced one every year since. Prior to this Administration, 2005 was the last year that a report had been delivered to Congress.

While the State Department has the lead in drafting the report, the Department of Defense contributes and is fully consulted throughout the process, as mandated by the Arms Control and Disarmament Act. Producing the compliance report also requires input from the Intelligence Community and the Department of Energy.

As part of this process, In July of this year, the United States announced its determination that Russia is in violation of its INF Treaty obligations not to possess, produce, or flight-test a ground-launched cruise missile with a range capability of 500 to 5,500 kilometers, or to possess or produce launchers of such missiles.

We take this violation extremely seriously. The INF Treaty, negotiated and ratified during the Reagan Administration, eliminated an entire class of ballistic and cruise missiles, capable of delivering nuclear and non-nuclear weapons. The INF Treaty benefits the security of the United States, our allies, and the Russian Federation. The United States is committed to making every effort to ensure the continued viability of the INF Treaty.

We have raised with Russia our concerns regarding its violation of the INF Treaty and have since held senior-level bilateral discussions with the aim of returning Russia to verifiable compliance with its Treaty obligations.

To date, Russia has been unwilling to acknowledge its violation or address our concerns. Therefore, we are reviewing a series of diplomatic, economic, and military measures to protect the interests of the United States and our Allies, and encourage Russia to uphold its nuclear arms control commitments. First, the United States is engaging diplomatically with Russia as noted above, and we

continue to consult closely with our Allies. Let me underscore that our Allies have made clear their interest in preserving the INF Treaty. On September 5, at the NATO Summit in Wales, Allies noted:

“it is of paramount importance that disarmament and non-proliferation commitments under existing treaties are honoured, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which is a crucial element of Euro-Atlantic security. In that regard, Allies call on Russia to preserve the viability of the INF Treaty through ensuring full and verifiable compliance.”

Second, we are actively reviewing potential economic measures in response to Russia’s violation. And third, the United States is assessing options in the military sphere to ensure that Russia would not gain a significant military advantage from its violation of the INF Treaty.

Currently, there is debate in Russia about its nuclear modernization programs and about the contribution of the INF Treaty to Russia’s security. It is important for Russia to take into account that no military decisions happen in a vacuum. Actions beget actions. Our countries have been down the road of needless, costly, and destabilizing arms races. We know where that road leads, and we are fortunate that our past leaders had the wisdom and strength to turn us in a new direction. We will keep pressing the Russian leadership to come back into compliance with all of its international obligations.

I would like to assure this committee that the Obama Administration is committed to bringing Russia back into compliance with the INF Treaty. We will not waver in this effort. But the security of the United States and its allies is not negotiable. We must also take steps to ensure our continued collective security should Russia continue in this violation of its INF obligations.

But just as during the Cold War, we will not allow Russia’s bad actions in one arena to compromise U.S. national security in another. For more than 40 years, arms control has been a tool that has contributed substantially to the national security interest of the United States, providing predictability and stability to us and to the global community. As the owners of more than 90% of the global nuclear stockpile, the United States and Russia continue to have a special responsibility to protect and preserve those regimes. We will continue to pursue arms control and nonproliferation tools – along with effective verification mechanisms – because they are the best path that we can take to effectively limit and reduce nuclear threats and prevent such weapons from proliferating to other

nation states or falling into the hands of extremists bent on causing colossal destruction. We are committed to monitoring and ensuring compliance with these agreements, and we will continue to tirelessly press Russia to return to its obligations under the INF Treaty. At the same time, we will continue to assess all of the tools—military, economic, and diplomatic—available to the United States and its allies to ensure our national security. And of course we will continue to consult with Congress and our allies and partners on these efforts.

Thank you for your partnership in this effort, and I look forward to answering your questions.