

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 28, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
439 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We write out of serious concern with efforts to report out of the Foreign Relations Committee the Resolution of Ratification for the New START Treaty prior to the August Recess next week. If such a vote were to occur on the present schedule, we would be obliged to vote against the resolution.

First, we are concerned that our request for witnesses in a letter to you on May 18, 2010 has been totally ignored. We reminded you of this request and other concerns in a letter of June 29, 2010. It appears you have decided that only one panel of critical witnesses in 12 hearings completes the record, and that two critical voices out of 22 are sufficient. We respectfully disagree.

We were also disappointed that no former national lab directors have been permitted to testify regarding their concerns about our nuclear weapons complex, even though they have voiced serious concerns to Secretaries Gates and Chu. It is important for this committee to hear from them directly and we request that you at least print the attached letter in the record.

Second, we are concerned by the lack of information coming from the administration. Despite participating in hearings since May, many of our questions for the record posed to government witnesses remain unanswered. While we have finally received a number of responses, these responses only arrived yesterday. This gives us little time to review them and seek further clarifications which, given some of the responses we have received, are very necessary. In addition, we requested access to the negotiating record to clarify assertions made by the administration. To date we have not been afforded an opportunity to review the treaty's full negotiating record. It would be beneficial if the administration provided access that the Senate has had on the ABM, INF, START I, and CTBT treaties.

Third, we are concerned that the schedule for mark-up would deny us the opportunity to hear the views of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) and the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) - which we also referenced in our June 29, 2010 letter. Some of us are members of these committees as well and they also have an important role to play regarding this treaty. We understand the Armed Services Committee will not hold its final hearing on New START until tomorrow. Acting before we receive the views of SSCI and SASC weakens the consultative nature of the Senate as it reviews a treaty of this magnitude.

Finally, we have not seen the Resolution of Ratification and ask that you engage in a genuine consultation of the views of Senators on both side of the aisle. Unlike some business that comes before the Senate, unless the Resolution actually reflects the input of Senators on both sides of the aisle, we do not see how it could gain the support necessary for ratification, this year or otherwise.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Jan E. Rinal
John Barrasso
Joni DeMint

James M. Inhofe
Liz Cheney

Attachment