

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 28, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express our serious concern about the status of the New START Treaty. Our concerns are amplified given that the senior officials at the State Department who would lead our arms control negotiations to either extend or replace New START are not in place.

The Trump Administration has provided Congress with only limited information on the Administration's intent as it pertains to the New START Treaty. In Congressional testimony, administration witnesses have told us that President Trump has asked the Department to seek a broader arms control agreement that includes China and new Russian strategic nuclear systems. Unfortunately, we have received little reassurance from the Administration that this path – or any path – is being actively pursued.

It is important the United States begin a strategic dialogue with China, and separately, to address concerns surrounding new Russian strategic systems. At the same time, it is highly unlikely that the Administration could negotiate a serious new arms control agreement that addresses these complex issues before the New START Treaty expires in February 2021.

In the 16 months left before the current Treaty expires, we urge the Administration instead to put its energy toward extending New START, thus guaranteeing continued strategic stability between the United States and Russia.

The fact that there are no Senate-confirmed senior leaders at the State Department with responsibility over nuclear negotiations is deeply troubling. On October 18th, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Andrea Thompson resigned her post amid a cloud of suspicion over the fact that she failed to report personal connections to Maria Butina. In addition, there is no Senate confirmed Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance. There are no current nominees for either position. While we have no doubt that personnel serving in Acting capacities in these positions will do their best to execute their respective duties, the reality is that these individuals are ill-positioned to lead the negotiation of a new arms control treaty that will require Senate advice and consent.

The lack of senior leadership and the dearth of information coming from the administration regarding these critical security issues is alarming and leaves us deeply concerned that in the

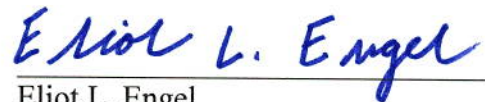
near future Russia's strategic nuclear systems will be completely unconstrained and that the United States will lose key insights into Russia's nuclear arsenal.

We strongly urge you to brief Congress as soon as possible and on an ongoing basis on the development and implementation of your strategy to address strategic stability between the United States and Russia. It is our desire to work closely with you to extend the New START Treaty.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



Eliot L. Engel
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee