

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 18, 2010

Weekly Address: START is About the Safety and Security of America; Not Scoring Political Points

WASHINGTON – In this week's address, President Obama called on members of Congress to come together to ratify the new START treaty just as they were able to come together to pass the essential economic package he signed into law on Friday. Ratifying a treaty like START is not about winning a victory for an administration or a political party, it is about the safety and security of the country. This is why it has been endorsed by both Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, every living Republican Secretary of State, our NATO allies, and the leadership of the military.

The audio and video of the address will be available online at www.whitehouse.gov at 6:00 a.m. EDT, Saturday, December 18, 2010.

Remarks of President Barack Obama – As Prepared for Delivery
Weekly Address
The White House
December 18, 2010

This week, Congress passed – and I signed into law – an essential economic package that will help grow our economy, spur businesses, and jumpstart job creation.

Instead of a New Years Day tax hike on the vast majority of Americans, two million Americans who've lost their jobs through no fault of their own will now know with certainty that they won't lose their emergency unemployment insurance at the end of the month. Eight million college students who'd otherwise face a tuition hike next semester will continue having access to the American Opportunity Tax Credit. Twelve million families with twenty-four million children will benefit from extensions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. And millions of entrepreneurs who've been waiting to invest in their businesses will receive new tax incentives to help them expand, buy new equipment, or make upgrades, freeing up money to hire new workers.

This package, which is so important for our economy at this pivotal time, was the product of hard negotiations. Like any negotiations, there was give and take on both sides. But I'm heartened by our ability to come together to do what's best for middle class families across this country, and our economy as a whole.

Before going away for the holiday break, I'm hopeful we can also come together on another urgent national priority – and that is, the new START treaty that will reduce the world's nuclear arsenals and make America more secure. Twenty-five years ago, the Soviet Union and United States each had about 25,000 nuclear weapons. In the decades since, that number has been reduced by over 70 percent, and we have had on-site inspections of Russian nuclear facilities. That progress would not have been possible without strategic arms control treaties.

During the past year, however, our old treaty with Russia expired, and without a new one, we won't be able to verify Russia's nuclear arsenal, which would undercut President Reagan's call to trust, but verify, when it comes to nuclear weapons. Without a new treaty, we'll risk turning back the progress we've made in our relationship with Russia, which is essential to enforce strong sanctions against Iran, secure vulnerable nuclear materials from terrorists, and resupply our troops in Afghanistan. And we'll risk undermining American leadership not only on nuclear proliferation, but a host of other challenges around the world.

Ratifying a treaty like START isn't about winning a victory for an administration or a political party. It's about the safety and security of the United States of America. That's why this treaty is supported by both Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush. That's why it's supported by every living Republican Secretary of State, our NATO allies, and the leadership of the United States military. Indeed, the Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hoss Cartwright, said this week that the military needs this treaty, and they need it badly. And that's why every President since Ronald Reagan has pursued a treaty like START, and every one that has been reviewed by the Senate has passed with strong bipartisan support.

We have taken the time to get this right. The START treaty has now been under review by the Senate for over seven months. It's gone through 18 hearings. Nearly 1,000 questions have been asked – and answered. Several Republican Senators have come out in support of ratification. Meanwhile, further delay comes at a cost. Every minute we drag our feet is a minute that we have no inspectors on the ground at those Russian nuclear sites.

It's time to get this done. It's time to show the same spirit of common purpose on our security that we showed this week on our economy. It's time to remember the old saying that politics stops at the water's edge. That saying was

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December 18, 2010 6:00 AM

Weekly Address: National Security Over Politics on START

BLOG POSTS ON THIS ISSUE

January 01, 2011 5:30 AM EST

Weekly Address: The New Year

The President resolves to do all he can to get the economy growing and create jobs, and encourages Republicans to embrace their new responsibility to govern.

December 24, 2010 12:00 AM EST

West Wing Week: "AKA Santa Claus"

Welcome to the West Wing Week, your guide to everything that's happening at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Walk step by step with the President as he signs the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell," looks back at an historic lame duck session, reads to kids for the Holiday season, and receives the Census report.

December 22, 2010 5:32 PM EST

At the United Nations Security Council, Young People Speak Up



The United Nations Security Council met in New York earlier this week to discuss future threats to global peace and security... with a packed house of young people.

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coined by a Republican Senator, Arthur Vandenberg, who partnered with a Democratic President, Harry Truman, to pass landmark national security measures at the dawn of the Cold War. Today, over sixty years later, when we're threatened not only by nuclear weapons, but an array of other dangers, that's a principle we must continue to uphold. Thank you, and have a nice weekend.

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