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REMARKS TO THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW) CONVENTION

MARCH 2, 1998

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Moon.

As a son of a veteran of a foreign war, it is a special honor to address your distinguished organization this morning on behalf of the President. My father was a combat fighter pilot in the China-Burma-India theater during WWII. As a result, we were raised in our family to appreciate the truth of the statement inscribed on the wall at the Korean War Memorial: "Freedom Isn’t Free."

I understand you have heard a number of excellent presentations on defense and national security issues in your proceedings to date. I also understand I am appearing this morning as the "warm-up" for the "main event" -- a speech by General Shelton, our superb new Chief of the Joints Chiefs of Staff. I believe my principal task here is to accentuate my Southern "twang" to the point that by the time the Chairman arrives he will appear to speak with no accent whatsoever.

More seriously, what I want to do this morning is to talk about one aspect of our defense posture and our national security strategy that I suspect no other speaker will touch upon during your conference on The Role of U.S. Nuclear Weapons.

I recognize that nuclear weapons are not a foreign topic for the VFW:

- VFW veterans of WWII know that their use hastened the end of the war in the Pacific and saved countless thousands of American lives.

- VFW veterans of Korea and Vietnam know the dilemmas and frustrations of trying to reconcile the almost unimaginable
destructive capabilities of these awesome weapons with the policy limitations and restrictions of regional wars fought during the Cold War.

- VFW veterans of the Gulf War know that President Bush's threat to subject Iraq to overwhelming destruction had Saddam Hussein used his weapons of mass destruction played a major role in persuading Saddam not to use the chemical and biological weapons we now know he possessed in frightening quantities.

- And all of us who are veterans of the Cold War know that America's strategic nuclear deterrent underpinned our policy of containment and, together with the inherent appeal of our democratic values and culture and economy, contributed enormously to our triumph in that long twilight struggle.

- But even among those who appreciate the historical role of U.S. nuclear weapons, I am often asked: "Why do we need them now -- seven years after the end of the Cold War?"

That is certainly a serious question; and it is one that deserves a serious answer. Let me read to you how your Commander-in-Chief, President Clinton, answers that question:

Our nuclear deterrent posture is one of the most visible and important examples of how U.S. military capabilities can be used effectively to deter aggression and coercion. Nuclear weapons serve as a hedge against an uncertain future, a guarantee of our security commitments to allies and a disincentive to those who would contemplate developing or otherwise acquiring their own nuclear weapons. In this context, the United States must continue to maintain a robust triad of strategic forces sufficient to deter any hostile foreign leadership with access to nuclear forces and to convince it that seeking a nuclear advantage would be futile.

Let me elaborate briefly: first, we believe that strategic nuclear deterrence still matters -- not because we believe Russia (or for that matter China) might be tempted to launch a nuclear strike against us today, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, etc., but because we are not yet sure how far into the future you can continue that progression. In a world in which the future course of Russia and China is still marked with uncertainties, regimes and intentions can change much more quickly than capabilities. To be sure, we are working very hard
to ensure these two countries stay on a positive course in their bilateral relations with the United States. But having invested trillions and trillions of dollars in building an awesome strategic nuclear deterrent -- a deterrent that is comprised of more just hardware -- more than just missiles, bombers and warheads -- but also of personnel who are trained and proficient in their mission areas -- we want to be very careful and prudent before we take that formidable capability apart. As Winston Churchill once said: before you take down the nuclear weapons, be sure -- and more than sure -- that you know what you are putting in their place. That is why last November, the President signed a new directive reaffirming the importance of maintaining a robust strategic nuclear deterrent across a triad of bombers, submarines and ICBMs.

Now, the good news -- and I believe it is very good news indeed -- is that we can carry forward with this nuclear policy and secure the positive contributions that nuclear weapons make to our national security at force levels dramatically lower than those we came to know during the Cold War. The PDD that the President signed in November confirms the unanimous view of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Strategic Command that we can maintain a robust strategic nuclear deterrent with about 2000-2500 strategic nuclear warheads deployed across the triad -- a level 80% below the level we had deployed when the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. This is the level that President Clinton and President Yeltsin agreed last year at the Helsinki Summit would be set as the ceiling for a new "START III Treaty." And we will begin negotiations on this treaty just as soon as the Russian Duma ratifies the START II Treaty -- hopefully, this month or next.

Our approach to moving beyond the nuclear levels and nuclear postures of the Cold War involves, of course, more than the strategic arms reductions treaties. Since 1991 we have:

- Removed all non-strategic nuclear forces from surface ships and submarines.
- Dealerted all strategic nuclear bombers and Minuteman II missiles.
- Deactivated the entire Poseidon SSBN force early.
- Converted all B-1B bombers to a conventional role.
• Cancelled numerous nuclear programs, including the Rail Garrison MX and the Midgetman ICBM.

• Together with Russia, detargeted all nuclear missiles.

• And, together with Russia, signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) -- longest sought, hardest fought prize in history of arms control.

• Last year, the VFW gave its support to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The President greatly appreciated and valued that endorsement. Your support -- together with that of a particularly distinguished member of your organization -- Senator Bob Dole -- made a tremendous difference in the decision last April by 74 members of Senate to give its advice and consent to that important treaty. In his State of the Union speech this year, the President asked the Senate to give its advice and consent to the CTB Treaty this year. We hope that the VFW will conclude that this crucial treaty is also deserving of its support.

As the President said in his State of the Union speech:

By ending nuclear testing, we can help to prevent the development of new and more dangerous weapons and make it more difficult for non-nuclear states to build them.

The President also announced in that speech that:

...four former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- Generals John Shalikashvili, Colin Powell, and David Jones, and Admiral William Crowe -- have endorsed this treaty.

That was followed by the endorsement by the directors of our three nuclear laboratories last month. And in his recent speech at the National Defense University, the President noted that the CTB enjoyed the support of General Habiger, the Commander of the Strategic Command. There are several reasons why all these military and civilian leaders support this crucial treaty:

• First, it allows America to maintain a safe and reliable nuclear deterrent. We are fundamentally committed to maintaining our strategic deterrent, and, through our stockpile stewardship program at our national laboratories, we
are fundamentally committed to maintaining high confidence in the reliability safety and performance of our nuclear weapons without conducting actual nuclear explosive tests. The point of the Treaty is to ban the bang -- not the bomb.

• Second, it constrains the development of more advanced and dangerous nuclear weapons by the declared nuclear powers.

• Third, it constrains "rogue" states' nuclear weapons development and other states' nuclear capabilities.

• And fourth, it strengthens the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime and the U.S. ability to lead the global nonproliferation effort (without the CTBT, no NPT extension).

In short, as the President said in his letter transmitting the Treaty to the Senate last fall:

We believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is in the best interests of the United States, and that its provisions will significantly further our nuclear nonproliferation and arms control objectives and strengthen international security.

Throughout its history, the VFW has worked tirelessly to ensure that Americans remained both vigilant to the dangers that threaten our nation's security and open to the opportunities to build a safer world.

We appreciate, greatly, your service to this nation -- past, present, and future.

As Victor Lazlo tells Humphrey Bogart in the last scene in the classic movie, Casablanca: "...with you on our side, I know we will win."

Thank you.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
CTBT INSERT
DNC SPEECH
THE WHITE HOUSE
SEPTEMBER 24, 1998

Before I begin, I would like to note the importance of this date in history. Two years ago today, I became the first world leader to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty - the longest-sought, hardest-fought prize in the history of arms control. Since then, 150 states have signed this historic Treaty, including all of our NATO allies, Russia, China, Israel, Japan and South Korea. 20 states have ratified, including Britain, France, Germany, Australia and Brazil. It is my strong hope that India and Pakistan will join the list, and thereby reduce nuclear tensions in South Asia. I discussed this with Prime Minister Sharif on Monday and I welcome his commitment yesterday to adhere to the treaty by next fall. Further discussions will

Today also marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Senate vote, 80-19, to approve the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which John Kennedy considered his greatest accomplishment as President. Senate approval of the LTBT took place less than two months after it was signed and within seven weeks of its submission to the Senate. Contrast that with the Senate, which has failed to take action on the CTBT two years after it was signed.

The Senate's inaction is extremely unfortunate. The CTBT will constrain the development of more sophisticated and powerful nuclear weapons and give us a powerful new tool in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The American people understand that
Senate approval of the CTBT is the right thing to do. I urge the Senate to act as early as possible next year.
Two years ago today, I was proud to be the first world leader to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty – which was first proposed by President Eisenhower, and completed in 1996. Since then, 150 states have signed this historic Treaty, including all of our NATO allies, Russia, China, Israel, Japan and South Korea. Twenty states already have ratified, including Britain, France, Germany, Australia and Brazil. It is my strong hope that India and Pakistan will join the list, and thereby reduce nuclear tensions in South Asia. I discussed this with Prime Minister Sharif on Monday and I welcome his commitment yesterday to adhere to the treaty by next fall. I look forward to further discussion with the leaders of Pakistan and India as we emphasize our common obligation to build peace and stability.

Today also marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Senate bipartisan vote, 80-19, to approve the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which President John Kennedy considered his greatest accomplishment as President. In 1963, Senate approval of the LTBT took place less than two months after it was signed and within seven weeks of its submission to the Senate. Contrast that with the CTBT, which remains unratified two years after it was signed, where a year after it was submitted the Senate has yet to take any action toward ratification.

The CTBT will ban all nuclear weapons explosions tests. As a result, it will constrain the development of more sophisticated and powerful nuclear weapons and give us a powerful new
tool in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The American people understand that Senate approval of the CTBT is the right thing to do. I strongly urge the Senate to act and to give its advice and consent as early as possible next year.
Tony, FYI - Copied below is the CTBT editorial that appeared in the Washington Post today:

The Test Ban and Arms Control

Tuesday, September 8, 1998; Page A14

AN EARLY Senate vote on funds for implementation of the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty indicates that the two-thirds majority needed to ratify the test ban may be lacking. There would be some votes from the Republican majority for a treaty, but at this moment the dominant blocking position of the party leadership looks strong. The evident resistance to ratification is attributed not simply to dissatisfaction with some of the treaty's terms -- there isn't all that much dissatisfaction -- but to a fundamental and wrongheaded quarrel with the premises of arms control itself.

Modern arms control was invented during the Cold War to restrict the nuclear armories of the then-two great powers and, if not to bring something deserving of the name of peace between them, then to lessen the risks and costs of their preparing for nuclear war. There were ups and downs, and their ultimate worth can be argued, but there is no denying that at a certain point Ronald Reagan demolished arms control as everyone had known it. From being a policy aimed at producing nuclear parity or stalemate in a condition of reduced but continuing political hostility, arms control became under President Reagan a bold program to end Soviet-American nuclear competition and beyond that, to close out the Cold War itself by seeing to the transformation of the Soviet Union. Many other hands, especially Mikhail Gorbachev's, shared in this task. But Ronald Reagan was a leading contributor to the different state of affairs we enjoy with Russia to this day.

Since the Cold War's demise, the urgency has gone out of classical arms control. The United States, far from deterring Russia and preserving a balance of terror, is helping Russia dismantle its excessive and expensive nuclear capability, concentrating on the specter of "loose nukes" -- weapons under uncertain official control and vulnerable to private theft and misuse. Still, the weapons that most trouble the United States and Russia are those in the hands, or in the aspirations, of third countries. Nonproliferation or counter-proliferation is at the heart of post-Cold War arms control.

This is the context in which the comprehensive test ban treaty, which was decades in the making, finally was signed earlier this year. This arms-control perennial had changed from being a check on Russian and American arms programs into a restraint on the spread of weapons of mass destruction among assorted regimes around the world. This is the test ban's 21st century mission: to give the multitude of nations an additional lever with which to press Iran and Iraq, North Korea, India, Pakistan and Israel -- and rogues elsewhere -- to abandon or slow their nuclear urges.

Leading Senate Republicans perversely persist in blaming the test ban, and by extension the whole updated post-Cold War framework of arms control, for nuclear and chemical and other programs being pursued by various countries. These naive senators seem to believe that arms-control measures are magically self-enforcing. They fail to understand that the signatories of arms-control agreements must take upon themselves the burdens of observing their terms and of enforcing compliance to others' formal pledges of self-denial. If the signatories fall short, the responsibility falls on them, not on the agreements.

The senators also profess to rely on American power and American technology alone -- especially on a new national missile defense -- to ensure the security of the United States. Such a missile defense is in the works, but questions remain about its strategic purpose, efficacy and cost. The pace of pondering these questions has
itself become a sharp political issue. Meanwhile, some senators carelessly would throw away the increments to American security that could be added by cooperation with other friendly countries in matters such as the chemical weapons treaty, the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and the test ban.

These are imperfect instruments, but they are capable of serving American requirements well. Even if a missile defense of minimal cost, deadly accuracy and reliability were ready today, which it is not, those instruments would strengthen the American position in the world.

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Reasons To Ratify, Not To Stall

By Sidney D. Drell

The nuclear tests by India and Pakistan have led some in the United States Senate to seek further delay on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which has already been awaiting ratification for more than a year. Senator Jesse Helms of Mississippi, the majority leader, said on Friday that "the nuclear spiral in Asia demonstrates the irrelevance of the "sacred" on the treaty, calling the treaty "inoperable and useless.

To the contrary, the treaty's international monitoring system, when used in combination with our own intelligence resources, provides the means to verify the test ban effectively. Moreover, a quick vote in the Senate approving the treaty is an essential response to the South Asian nuclear gambit.

While it is true that American intelligence has to provide initial warning of India's first three nuclear tests on May 11, we were well aware that the technical preparations had been made for testing. Furthermore, the global network of seismic sensors that will form the "test," the treaty's verification system, do not locate and identify the main nuclear blast that day.

It is evident that the system also proved effective in detecting Pakistan's tests on Thursday and on Saturday. And the treaty calls for the monitoring system to be beefed up. Also, the treaty would allow us to request a short space, on-site inspection if we had any evidence suggesting that a nuclear weapons test might have occurred.

India has claimed that its last two tests were "earthquakes.""n

Senator Lott is wrong about the test ban treaty

Senator Lott, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is wrong to say that the treaty will not be amended in any way. The United States has been discussing amendments with the other signatories in order to address their concerns.

Addressing the international condemnation and sanctions that have resulted from these tests is of utmost importance. The Senate ratification of the treaty would send a strong signal to the world that the United States is committed to a test ban.

India has claimed that its last two tests were "earthquakes."n

Precisely for this reason, Article 3 of the treaty calls for a review conference in September 1997 to look for ways to put the treaty into effect that has not been approved by all, in nuclear proliferation (e.g., those with nuclear weapons or with nuclear materials). Only those nations that have ratified the treaty will have a seat at that conference. Thus, the United States must ratify the treaty this year for it to be effective.