

producing American energy before more of these outrageous trips and expenses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I know the START treaty is going to be before us soon. I realize we had a motion to proceed to that today. I think I have indicated a willingness to support the treaty if all the t's are crossed and the i's are dotted on modernization. I know there are a number of commitments that are forthcoming from the White House and other places regarding modernization.

My hope is the same on missile defense. I am very concerned we are doing this in the middle of an omnibus, which is a 1,924-page omnibus. I am very concerned about a treaty of this substance, this seriousness, dealing with nuclear arms, being taken up in such a disconcerted way.

I voted against the motion to proceed. I do hope, as the leaders indicated, all of those who wish to offer amendments—and I know there will be a number of serious and thoughtful amendments that matter—will be heard. I am still skeptical that can be done in an appropriate way.

Again, I think this treaty, with the t's crossed and i's dotted, with the appropriate time allotted, whether it is now or it ends up being in February, and if the resolution is not weakened in any way, is still something I will plan to support. But I am very skeptical we can do that appropriately during this lameduck session, with this omnibus before us.

Let me turn to the omnibus because that is what the American people are most focused on today. I cannot tell you how disappointed I am that an appropriations bill of this size—one that has an increase in spending and over 6,000 earmarks—as a matter of fact, I know the Chair is aware of this because we had a great conversation this morning about spending. We had a large number of people on the Senate floor yesterday talking about our concern for fiscal issues. But the bill is 1,924 pages long. These are just the earmarks. These are just the earmarks, not the bill itself I am holding.

I am stunned that, after the message that was sent during this last election, Congress will basically say—or many Members—to the American people: We understand you are very upset and that you have concerns that are true concerns about the country's fiscal condition. Yet we don't really care.

Mr. President, it is my hope that what will happen is that saner heads will prevail and that what we will do is pass a short-term CR—a continuing resolution, for those who may be listening in and don't know what that is. That would give us the ability to operate the government through February

or March so that people such as the Presiding Officer, who was just elected, and myself and others who care so deeply about the fiscal issues of our country would have the ability to put spending constraints in place.

I think everyone knows our country faces—and these are not rhetorical issues—a crisis as it relates to these issues. The world markets are watching us. I think we have seen our interest rates on our bonds rise pretty dramatically even since the tax bill came out. And that was a tough vote for me because, again, in order to create certainty and to ensure that the economic prosperity of this country resumed and that we continue on the pace we are on today, I felt it was important to go ahead and get that behind us.

But I always thought and I hoped—and still do—that what we would move to very quickly is really driving down spending in relation to our country's gross domestic output. I have offered an amendment to do just that, as I did that on the tax bill. I plan to offer the same on this particular discussion we are having now. But I am unbelievably disappointed that we would even consider punting the spending issue for a year. That is what we would be doing. In essence, if this omnibus bill were to pass, we would be passing a huge spending bill.

Again, let me go back. Typically, appropriations are handled one bill at a time. There are typically 12 appropriations bills. What happens when we do that is we are able to pick out wasteful programs here on the floor and maybe defund those, and we are able to really scrutinize all of the programs of government, which is what the American people want us to do. Instead of that—especially in a climate where the American people almost revolted at the polls, and I know you know this very well—instead of carefully considering our spending, what we are being asked to do is to vote on 1 bill that has all 12 of those appropriations bills packed into it, again with 6,000 earmarks, and we are asked to vote on that here in the next few days. I think it is reprehensible, and I say that respectfully.

I know people on our Appropriations Committee have worked together in a very serious way over the last year. I know they have. And I know the Appropriations Committee is a committee that probably has the most bipartisan spirit of any committee in the Senate. So I can understand their desire to want to finish their work. But it is being done inappropriately. This is not the way serious people conduct their business. They take up these bills one at a time. Sometimes there are two or three, when they are very small appropriations bills, that are banded together. That is called a “minibus,” if you will. But to do this all at once flies in the face of everything we know to be good government. All of us know this is not the right way to fund government.

A much better way for us would be to pass a short-term continuing resolution bill, as I just mentioned, to kick this down to February or March and allow us to look at something like the amendment I have offered where we take spending that is at an alltime high of 24 percent of our gross domestic product today and over the next 10 years take it down to our 40-year average of 20.6 percent. CLAIRE MCCASKILL and I are cosponsoring, in a bipartisan way, a bill or an amendment—depending on how it is offered—to do just that, and there may be other things.

We know the deficit reduction commission just spent a tremendous amount of time—and I know the Presiding Officer has talked personally to leaders multiple times—they spent a tremendous amount of time this year looking at what we as a government need to do to be responsible; to make sure people around the world view our credit as something in which they are willing to invest; to really make sure that, for these pages who sit in front of me and who work so hard here, we are not, in essence, living a life and layering debt upon debt on top of the balance sheet they will have to deal with.

I cannot believe that, in the atmosphere of just having that report come forward, having us look at how Draconian the problem is and some of the tough decisions a courageous Congress would need to make to put our country back on the right path, we would even consider passing this massive piece of legislation that, in essence, would kick the can down the road for a year and basically let the wind out of this momentum that has been building for us to actually do the right thing. I can't imagine we would do that.

I know the Chair knows our debt ceiling vote is going to be coming up soon. It is going to happen sometime in April, maybe May. Maybe it will drag out as long as the first week in June. That is a vote where we vote to raise the amount of debt this country can enter into. I know a lot of people say it is irresponsible not to vote for a debt ceiling increase because we have already spent the money. It would be like going out and running up a credit card bill and then not paying it. But I think it is irresponsible not to act responsibly prior to taking that vote.

What I am so disappointed in is that a vote on this omnibus bill before us probably prevents us from going ahead and doing some things this spring that we know are responsible and will really drive down the cost of government to an appropriate level.

So I know there is a lot of pressure, probably, in the caucuses—maybe the caucus on the other side of the aisle that meets at lunch; I know there is a meeting again tomorrow—I know there is a lot of pressure to get this out of the way. But I know with every cell of my body that passing this omnibus right now is absolutely the wrong thing to do for the country from the

standpoint of good government, and I absolutely know it is the wrong thing to do to all of those citizens across this country who became involved in this.

I know there are people on both sides of the aisle who care deeply about the future of this country, and I know there are people on both sides of the aisle who have some commonality as to what the path forward is in making sure this country lives up to its obligations to the American citizens, that we don't just live for today. That is what, by the way, we would be doing by passing this—living for today and passing on those obligations to the future.

I hope that by the time we take the vote on this bill, it will be defeated and that people who deeply care about the future of this country will come together, pass a short-term continuing resolution—which I think most of us in this body know is the responsible thing to do—and that we will begin to work after the first of next year, when this lameduck session ends, doing the things this country needs most, and that is all of us having the courage to make those cuts and do what is necessary to get our country back on a sound footing.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I thank the Chair for the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

NEW START TREATY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, as chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I would like to address the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty—called New START—that is now before the Senate for ratification.

This treaty has been carefully vetted. I am confident the Senate will come to the conclusion that this treaty is in our national interest and will cast the necessary votes for ratification. I strongly support ratification.

Before speaking about intelligence issues related to this treaty, it is important to remind ourselves about the extraordinary, lethal nature of these nuclear weapons.

I was 12 years old when atomic bombs flattened both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Hiroshima bomb, estimated to have been 21 kilotons, killed 70,000 people outright. You can see from this chart the absolute devastation this bomb caused in Hiroshima. The Nagasaki bomb, at 15 kilotons—somewhat less—killed at least 40,000 people immediately. This is Nagasaki. Another 100,000 or so who survived the initial blasts died of injuries and radiation sickness. By the end of 1945, an estimated 220,000 people had lost their lives because of these two bombs.

The horrible images of disfigured bodies and devastating ruins have stayed with me all my life. I was part of the generation of youngsters being raised who hid under our desks in drills about atomic bombs and atomic weapons being unleashed.

So here is Nagasaki before the bomb, and here is Nagasaki after the bomb. It gives you a very good look at what it was like.

Today, we live in a world with far more nuclear weapons and even more powerful destructive capabilities. In May of this year, the Pentagon made a rare public announcement of the current U.S. nuclear stockpile—5,113 nuclear warheads, including deployed and nondeployed and not including warheads awaiting dismantlement. According to the Federation of American Scientists, Russia's stockpile includes 4,650 deployed warheads—deployed warheads—both strategic and tactical. Including nondeployed warheads, the estimate of Russia's arsenal is 9,000 warheads, plus thousands more waiting to be dismantled.

Many—and here is the key—many of these weapons are far in excess of 100 kilotons or more than five times the size of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some are far, far larger. Many of these weapons are on high alert, ready to be launched at a moment's notice, and their use would result in unimaginable devastation.

So I ask my colleagues during this debate to reflect carefully on the extraordinary, lethal nature of these weapons as we consider this treaty.

This treaty is actually a modest step forward, not a giant one. It calls for cutting deployed strategic nuclear warheads by 30 percent below the levels established under the 2002 Moscow Treaty to 1,550 each. It cuts launch vehicles, such as missile silos and submarine tubes, to 800 for each country. Deployed launch vehicles are capped at 700—more than 50 percent below the original START treaty.

According to the unanimous views of our Nation's military and civilian defense officials, this will not erode America's nuclear capability, our strategic deterrent, or our national defense.

The United States will still maintain a robust nuclear triad, able to protect our country and our national security interests.

As GEN James Cartwright, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former head of the United States Strategic Command, stated:

I think we have more than enough capacity and capability for any threat that we see today or that might emerge in the foreseeable future.

Additionally, these reductions in this New START treaty won't have to be completed until the treaty's seventh year, so there is plenty of time for a prudent drawdown. But while its terms are modest, its impacts are broad, and I wish now to describe some of the benefits of ratification.

I begin with the ways in which this treaty enhances our Nation's intelligence capabilities. This has been the lens through which the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has viewed the treaty, and I believe the arguments are strongly positive and persuasive.

There are three main points to make, and I will take them in turn.

They are, No. 1, the intelligence community can carry out its responsibility to monitor Russian activities under the treaty effectively. No. 2, this treaty, when it enters into force, will benefit intelligence collection and analysis. And No. 3, intelligence analysis indicates that failing to ratify the New START treaty will create negative consequences for the United States.

My comments today are, of course, unclassified, but I would note that there is a National Intelligence Estimate on monitoring the New START Treaty available to Senators. I have written a classified letter to Senators KERRY and LUGAR that spells out these arguments in greater detail. Members are welcome to review both documents.

Following President Reagan's advice to "trust but verify," and in line with all major arms control treaties for decades, New START includes several provisions that allow the United States to monitor how Russia is reducing and deploying its strategic arsenal, and vice versa.

The U.S. intelligence community will use these treaty provisions and other independent tools, such as the use of national technical means, for example, our satellites, to collect information on Russian forces and whether Russia is complying with the treaty's terms. These provisions include on-the-ground inspections of Russian nuclear facilities and bases—18 a year; regular exchanges on data on the warhead and missile production and locations; unique identifiers, a distinct alphanumeric code for each missile and heavy bomber for tracking purposes; a ban on blocking national technical means from collecting information on strategic forces, and other measures I will describe later in these remarks.

Without the strong monitoring and verification measures provided for in this treaty, we will know less about the number, size, location, and deployment status of Russian nuclear warheads. That is a fact.

As General Chilton, Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, recently said:

Without New START, we would rapidly lose insight into Russian nuclear strategic force developments and activities, and our force modernization planning and hedging strategy would be more complex and more costly. Without such a regime, we would unfortunately be left to use worst-case analyses regarding our own force requirements.

That is what a "no" vote on this treaty means.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin made the same point earlier this month. He said that if the United States doesn't ratify the treaty, Russia will have to respond, including augmentation of its stockpile. That is what voting "no" on this treaty means.

So these monitoring provisions are key, as are the trust and transparency they bring, and the only way to get to these provisions is through ratification.