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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

The White House
June 20, 2002

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions, signed at Moscow on May 24, 2002 (the "Moscow Treaty").

The Moscow Treaty represents an important element of the new strategic relationship between the United States and Russia. It will take our two nations along a stable, predictable path to substantial reductions in our deployed strategic nuclear warhead arsenals by December 31, 2012. When these reductions are completed, each country will be at the lowest level of deployed strategic nuclear warheads in decades. This will benefit the peoples of both the United States and Russia and contribute to a more secure world.

The Moscow Treaty codifies my determination to break through the long impasse in further nuclear weapons reductions caused by the inability to finalize agreements through traditional arms control efforts. In the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, both countries' strategic nuclear arsenals remained far larger than needed, even as the United States and Russia moved toward a more cooperative relationship. On May 1, 2001, I called for a new framework for our strategic relationship with Russia, including further cuts in nuclear weapons to reflect the reality that the Cold War is over. On November 13, 2001, I announced the United States plan for such cuts--to reduce our operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to a level of between 1700 and 2200 over the next decade. I announced these planned reductions following a careful study within the Department of Defense. That study, the Nuclear Posture Review, concluded that these force levels were sufficient to maintain the security of the United States. In reaching this decision, I recognized that it would be preferable for the United States to make such reductions on a reciprocal basis with Russia, but that the United States would be prepared to proceed unilaterally.

My Russian counterpart, President Putin, responded immediately and made clear that he shared these goals. President Putin and I agreed that our nations' respective reductions should be recorded in a legally binding document that would outlast both of our presidencies and provide predictability over the longer term. The result is a Treaty that was agreed without protracted negotiations. This Treaty fully meets the goals I set out for these reductions.

It is important for there to be sufficient openness so that the United States and Russia can each be confident that the other is fulfilling its reductions commitment. The Parties will use the comprehensive verification regime of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation

of Strategic Offensive Arms (the “START Treaty”) to provide the foundation for confidence, transparency, and predictability in further strategic offensive reductions. In our Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship between the United States and Russia, President Putin and I also decided to establish a Consultative Group for Strategic Security to be chaired by Foreign and Defense Ministers. This body will be the principal mechanism through which the United States and Russia strengthen mutual confidence, expand transparency, share information and plans, and discuss strategic issues of mutual interest.

The Moscow Treaty is emblematic of our new, cooperative relationship with Russia, but it is neither the primary basis for this relationship nor its main component. The United States and Russia are partners in dealing with the threat of terrorism and resolving regional conflicts. There is growing economic interaction between the business communities of our two countries and ever-increasing people-to-people and cultural contacts and exchanges. The U.S. military has put Cold War practices behind it, and now plans, sizes, and sustains its forces in recognition that Russia is not an enemy, Russia is a friend. Military-to-military and intelligence exchanges are well established and growing.

The Moscow Treaty reflects this new relationship with Russia. Under it, each Party retains the flexibility to determine for itself the composition and structure of its strategic offensive arms, and how reductions are made. This flexibility allows each Party to determine how best to respond to future security challenges.

There is no longer the need to narrowly regulate every step we each take, as did Cold War treaties founded on mutual suspicion and an adversarial relationship.

In sum, the Moscow Treaty is clearly in the best interests of the United States and represents an important contribution to U.S. national security and strategic stability. I therefore urge the Senate to give prompt and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and to advise and consent to its ratification.

George W. Bush.