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# Even Obama Wouldn't Trade DADT and Dream Act for New START. Would He?

By Russ Wellen, December 2, 2010

The Nuclear Threat Initiative's [Global Security Newswire](#) reports: "Key Senate leaders and the White House today appeared closer to striking a deal" to vote for New START before year's end, "but only if Democrats are willing to drop or vote down legislation on immigration and permitting gays to serve openly in the military."

President Obama wouldn't agree to that, would he? Especially after he's let the Republicans extort him to the tune of a commitment to spend \$86.2 billion over the next decade on maintaining current operations of the nuclear weapons complex along with modernization of its stockpile and infrastructure. In fact, Republican may have held one gun too many to the administration's head on New START. Jeffrey Lewis of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation and [Arms Control Wonk](#) told GSN: "I don't know if the White House is willing to accept such a trade."

Meanwhile, the New START-has-no-clothes message has finally gone mainstream. In [Overwrought on START](#),\* posted at the centrist National Interest, Benjamin Friedman and Owen Cote first point out, as many have:

Administration officials like noting that New START's eventual limit of 1550 deployed strategic warheads is 30 percent less than what the 2002 Moscow Treaty allowed. But that is an accounting trick. Under New START's counting rules, all warheads assigned to each bomber count as one warhead.

Beyond that, Friedman and Cote may be the only mainstream writers to have noted the true extent to which the administration has gone to win Republican votes for ratification (emphasis added):

The problem is that the price is already too high. . . . By faking a drawdown [New START] keeps Americans from noticing that deterring our enemies requires nothing like the force structure we plan to retain. . . . A submarine only force would provide all the deterrence we need at far less cost. *We don't need Russia's permission to give taxpayers that break.*

Funny how, when it comes to nuclear weapons, deficit hawks go all deficit dove.

\*Thanks to Greg Mello of the [Los Alamos Study Group](#) for brining the National Interest piece to our attention.

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