Mr. President, I think it is very important, as we debate what our nuclear weapons system needs to be, that we understand this concept and that we sort of take a map and use some common sense and try to evaluate what 6,000 nuclear weapons with over 100 kilotons of yield each could do to targets inside of our principal reason for deterrence, maintaining that arsenal, and that is Russia today.

I think common sense would cause us to pause and wonder whether or not we are keeping a level of weapons beyond what is necessary.

The purpose of this description is to give my colleagues a sense of this force and what this force could do if brought to bear by order of our Commander in Chief. I think it is fair for the American people to ask, first, what is the purpose of this force. According to the 2000 edition of the Secretary of Defense's Annual Report to the President and to Congress:

> Nuclear forces remain a critical element of the U.S. policy of deterrence.

Simply put, the United States maintains its nuclear arsenal to guard against an attack from any potential weapons of mass destruction threat. I think it is important for us as well to examine these potential threats and ask if our current nuclear forces are structured to adequately address them.

As I see it, there are three main sources of threat for which we must maintain a nuclear deterrent. The first is the threat from rogue nations like Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. While the United States must remain vigilant in the effort to confront the weapons of mass destruction programs of these nations, there is no evidence that any of these countries currently possess nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it would be hard to justify the expenditure of approximately $25 billion a year to maintain an arsenal of over 6,000 warheads to defend against the threat posed by rogue nations.

If not rogue nations, what about China? While the threat from China has gotten a lot of attention lately, press accounts indicate the Chinese have no more than 20 land-based nuclear missiles capable of reaching the United States. Also according to the media, Chinese nuclear weapons are not kept on continual alert. Rather, nuclear warheads and liquid fuel tanks are stored separate from their missiles. It would take time for the Chinese to fuel, arm, and launch these weapons. Now, just one of these weapons would cause immense pain and devastation, but the likelihood of their use, accidental or intentional, is low. Once again, the maintenance of over 6,000 warheads is hardly justified by China's 20 missiles.

The only other threat that can justify our nuclear force levels is the Russian nuclear arsenal. But what is the current state of the Russian nuclear arsenal?

The Russian military relies on the same triad of delivery systems as we do. In their land-based arsenal, the Russians have approximately:

180 SS–18 missiles with 10 warheads at 550 kiloton yields each,

They have 160 SS–19 missiles with six warheads at 550 kiloton yields each.

They have 86 SS–24 missiles with 10 warheads at 550 kilotons yields each.

They have 360 SS–25 missiles with a single warhead each at 550 kiloton yield, and they have

10 SS–27 Topol M missiles with a single warhead at 550 kiloton yield.

This is obviously an impressive force. Any one of these weapons could devastate an American city or cities. But the Russians are finding that many of these missiles are nearing the end of the service-lives. And budgetary constraints have slowed the pace of acquisition of their latest land-based missile, the Topol M, to the point at which they are having trouble maintaining the numbers of weapons that will be allowed under the START treaties.

The collapse of the Russian economy, and the resulting strain on the Russian military budget, has also had disastrous consequences for the Russian Navy. Russia now has less than 30 operational nuclear-armed submarines. In fact, the slow op tempo of Russian submarines has meant that at certain times none of these boats are at sea. Regardless, reports indicate these subs maintain almost 350 nuclear delivery vehicles with more than 1,500 available warheads.

The Russian Air Force has also suffered. At the end of 1998, Russia had about 70 strategic bombers, but not all of these were operational. Estimates are Russian strategic bombers have about 800 warheads on both nuclear bombs and air launched cruise missiles.

Mr. President, the overall picture of the Russian arsenal force is that it is deadly, but it is decaying as well at an extremely rapid rate. Russian generals have said that they see a time in the near future when the Russian strategic arsenal will be measured not in thousands but in hundreds of weapons. It is this decay in the Russian arsenal which I believe poses the greatest threat to the United States and should encourage us to do more to find ways in which to achieve significant parallel nuclear reductions.

Some will argue that we have in the process already a way to achieve those reductions and it is called START. Yet even if START II is ratified by the Russian Duma, the United States and Russia would still have 3,500 nuclear warheads on each side at the end of 2007. We can't afford to wait over 7 years to make reductions that leave the Russians with still more weapons than they can control.

In response, some argue not to worry, START II is going to be quickly followed by START III. In discussions with the Russians on a possible START III treaty, the United States has told Russia that we are not willing to go below the 2,000- to 2,500-warhead threshold. This number is based on a 1997 study on U.S. minimum deterrence needs completed by the then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili.

While I have no doubt that this report was professionally prepared and evaluated on criteria available at the time, I believe strongly it is time to redo this study. The current size of the United States and Russian nuclear arsenals is not based on any rational assessment of need; rather, it is a relic of the cold war. As the former commander of STRATCOM, Gen. Eugene Habiger, has said, ''The cold war was a unique war. And when the war ended, the loser really didn't lose. We still had this massive military might on both sides staring each other in the face.''

As I have described the accuracy, diversity, and power of our nuclear arsenal, I find it difficult to argue that the men and women at STRATCOM will be able to accomplish their objective of deterring attack with far fewer weapons. I don't know what the magic number is for minimum deterrence, but given our cooperative relationship with Russia, given the fact Russia is about to hold its third democratic election for President, and given our conventional and intelligence capabilities, I am confident we can deter any aggressor with less than 6,000, or 3,500, or even 2,000 warheads. It is time we begin the process to come up with a realistic estimate of our deterrence needs.

As long as nuclear weapons remain a reality in this world, the men and women at STRATCOM will have a job to do in defending our Nation. Their contribution to our safety cannot be underestimated. But just as they have a responsibility, we have a responsibility to act in a way that will decrease the danger of nuclear weapons and increase the safety and security of the American people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE FUENTES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I did not have the opportunity to vote on rollcall vote No. 34, the nomination of Julio M. Fuentes to be U.S. circuit judge, for the third circuit. Judge Fuentes is a very highly regarded judge, and had I been present on the floor, I would have voted ''yea.''

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to join a number of our colleagues in marking the 25th annual observance of International Women's Day.

Today, March 8, 2000, is a day on which people around the world will celebrate the myriad contributions and accomplishments of women.

Women in the United States and around the world have made tremendous progress toward full equality since this observance was initiated by the United Nations in 1975, the International Year of the Woman.