

U.S. Senator Sets Terms for Backing New START

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WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama must show greater commitment to modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal to gain Republican support for the New START arms control treaty with Russia, the Senate's No. 2 Republican said.

Senator Jon Kyl denied setting a price to support New START. But he told reporters Wednesday that the commitment he was seeking could cost up to \$10 billion more than the amount the administration has pledged to modernize U.S. nuclear weapons.

Obama wants the treaty ratified this year, but it needs 67 votes in the Senate, meaning that it cannot pass without substantial Republican support.

Kyl's demands would be difficult to meet by the end of the year. He wants Congress to appropriate extra funds, and he also wants to see administration budget plans.

Kyl said Republicans were seeking "a more precise and higher degree of commitment" to modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal, "so that we know that this program is not going to go

for a while and peter out."

Obama signed the treaty with President Dmitry Medvedev in April and sent it to the Senate in May. The treaty suffered a setback on Tuesday when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee delayed a ratification vote until mid-September after only one Republican, Senator Richard Lugar, publicly pledged support.

Since it might be hard to get everything done before Nov. 2 congressional elections, the Senate might need a "lame duck" session if it wants to vote on New START this year, Kyl said.

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