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Kissinger, Shultz back Obama push to eliminate nuclear arms

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By David Alexander

President Obama's push to reduce the global nuclear arms threat received an endorsement Tuesday from some big names in U.S. national security policy.

With a new round of strategic arms talks getting under way in Moscow, Obama met in the Oval Office with former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former Defense Secretary William Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn.



[1]

Obama, who outlined his vision of a world free of atomic weapons in a speech in Prague last month, said he welcomed the support of the bipartisan group, who have been pushing for over two years for the United States to lead an effort to eliminate nuclear arms.

"We do not want a world of continued nuclear proliferation," Obama told reporters after the meeting.

"It is absolutely imperative that America take leadership working with not just our Russian counterparts but countries all around the world to reduce and ultimately eliminate the dangers that are posed by nuclear weapons," he said.

"We can take some very specific steps in order to do that. We can revitalize our Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We can work with the Russians as the two countries with by far the largest nuclear stockpiles to continue to reduce our dependence on nuclear weapons. We can move forward on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty ... And we can lock down loose nuclear weapons that can fall into the hands of terrorists."

Shultz, speaking on behalf of the group, said the four former U.S. officials supported Obama's approach.

He did have one little quibble though. The group, he said, was really non-partisan, not bipartisan.

"This is a subject that ought to somehow get up above trying to get a partisan advantage," he said. "And it's of such importance that we need to take it on its own merits. And that's the way we've proceeded, and that's the way, at least it seems to us, you've proceeded."