

Main Committee I
U.S. Statement
2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference
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United States Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament
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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your strong leadership in chairing the Third Preparatory Meeting here last year, and congratulations on your assumption of this next important responsibility guiding the work of Main Committee I. The United States looks forward to supporting you and the work of this Committee.

The United States has accomplished much over the past five years, and we will continue our efforts to advance nuclear disarmament and increase confidence and transparency. We encourage all parties to join with the United States to be ambitious but also to advance realistic and achievable objectives in support of these efforts. The challenges to the NPT are real, but the Treaty is far too important to fail or be held hostage to ideas that will not command consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States remains unequivocally committed to Article VI of the NPT and to its full implementation. As President Obama declared in the 2009 Prague Speech, and reiterated in Berlin in 2013, the United States seeks to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. And as Secretary Kerry reiterated at the outset of this Conference, achieving this worthy goal will not be easy and will require patience, cooperation, and persistence to complete. Secretary Kerry also made clear that the United States can and must lead the way toward that goal, and we have done so consistently.

It is well known that U.S. stocks of nuclear weapons are at their lowest level in over half a century, more than 80% below the levels existing when the NPT entered into force in 1970. This is largely the result of unprecedented efforts on the part of the nuclear-weapon states. At the same time, these major reductions have been bolstered by several states seizing historic opportunities to rid themselves of nuclear weapons and join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states.

The U.S. record on disarmament is indisputable. Since the last time NPT Parties gathered to review the implementation of the Treaty in 2010, the United States and the Russian Federation in February 2011 brought the New START Treaty into force. Despite challenges elsewhere, we both are faithfully implementing our New START obligations. When New START is fully implemented in 2018, it will reduce operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to their lowest levels since the 1950s. The United States also has made clear our readiness to pursue further nuclear reductions with the Russian Federation, but progress requires a willing partner.

For those of you who are not aware, the mission of the U.S. nuclear complex has been totally transformed since the Cold War. Now, our investments are geared to ensure the safety and security of the existing stockpile and the dismantlement of retired warheads. Modernization of

our nuclear enterprise will over time allow for still greater reductions in the number of weapons we retain in reserve as a hedge.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States also has reduced the role of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy as outlined in the 2010 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) that states that the United States will not develop new nuclear warheads, and life extension programs for existing warheads will not support new military missions or provide for new military capabilities. Additionally, as reflected in the NPR, the United States has strengthened the negative security assurances that it provides to non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

Behind all the headlines on major nuclear arsenal reductions, there is an intensive daily effort of practical implementation activities. These activities support strategic stability and transparency, which enable future progress in disarmament. For example, in implementing New START, the United States and Russian Federation have exchanged more than 8,500 New START Treaty notifications that provide a detailed picture of U.S. and Russian strategic forces. In addition, the Treaty's on-site inspections enable each side to verify the validity of those data.

Disarmament is taking place every day in the United States. Over the past two decades alone the United States has dismantled 10,251 nuclear warheads. That works out to dismantling an average of more than one warhead per day, every day, for 20 years. And this complex and costly work continues.

And at this NPT Review Conference, the United States reported that approximately 2,500 warheads are retired and awaiting dismantlement, and that we will seek funding to accelerate dismantlement of retired U.S. nuclear warheads by 20 percent beginning in fiscal year 2017.

Underpinning all of our efforts, stretching back decades, has been our clear understanding and recognition of the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. But the issue is not whether nuclear weapons are a security issue, or a humanitarian issue – they are both. That is the message the United States put forward with the Baruch Plan to eliminate nuclear weapons in 1946 and has carried ever since. It is the same message we took to the December 2014 Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna. We participated in that conference to reinforce our message that the practical step-by-step path we are following remains the only realistic route to a world without nuclear weapons. Step by step does not mean one step at a time. It means we pursue all available avenues, with steps building on and creating opportunities for others.

Looking ahead, we see growing verification challenges as we move to smaller and smaller numbers of nuclear weapons. We can all acknowledge that verification will become increasingly complex at lower numbers of nuclear weapons, while the level of intrusiveness of verification to provide assurance to the international community will increase. All of us – every nation here – should be devoting ample time and energy to address this challenge right now.

It is for this reason that the United States, in partnership with more than 25 countries and the Nuclear Threat Initiative, launched in March the International Partnership for Nuclear

Disarmament Verification. The International Partnership is designed to develop a common understanding among states with and without nuclear weapons of monitoring and verification challenges across the nuclear weapons lifecycle -- from material production and control, warhead assembly and deployment, to storage, dismantlement, and disposition. We look forward to taking this exciting new program forward and reporting on our efforts in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States is also continuing its engagement with the other nuclear weapon states, the “P5,” on the issue of disarmament. Collectively, we have created a consensus NPT Reporting Framework and a P5 Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms that will increase mutual understanding. Ongoing P5 work on critical Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) inspection techniques will help enhance that Treaty’s verification regime. We were very pleased to participate in February in the sixth annual P5 Conference hosted in London by the United Kingdom. These conferences are building the foundation on which future P5 multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament could stand.

In the multilateral domain, the United States has observed a moratorium on nuclear explosive testing since 1992, and we will continue to pursue ratification of the CTBT. We further call on all states to refrain from nuclear explosive testing and to sign and ratify the Treaty if they have not yet done so.

The United States also remains steadfastly committed to launching negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) – a shared goal under Action 15 of the 2010 Action Plan, and an agreement recognized to be a vital and necessary step in multilateral nuclear disarmament. Nations that continue to block these negotiations should consider how their actions impede progress on nuclear disarmament and ultimately increase nuclear dangers for all. This year, under Canada’s leadership, a UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on FMCT has completed its work. It is our hope that the GGE and its final report will finally break this impasse and allow us to proceed with the negotiation of this important treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Ongoing multifaceted NPT implementation by States Parties every day around the world continues to bring us all forward on the path to the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. While perhaps no single State Party is fully satisfied with the progress achieved in every dimension of the Treaty, on balance the tremendous contributions of the NPT to the security of people everywhere is indisputable. The 2015 Review Conference is another important milestone on this journey in which all States Parties have an essential role to play, and the United States will continue to do its part.

Thank you.

