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Statement

by

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at

The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

3 May 2005
New York

Mr. President,

I join others in congratulating you on your Presidency of the Seventh NPT Review Conference. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. President,

For the past thirty-five years, the NPT has served us well as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. There has been both good news and bad news in its performance in curbing the spread of nuclear weapons.

The good news is that the Treaty has achieved near universality. Nuclear weapons have not spread to dozens of States as predicted in the 1960s. A number of countries have concluded that their security interests are better served by renouncing possession of nuclear weapons. South Africa set an example by completely dismantling its nuclear weapons and related programme in a verifiable and irreversible manner. Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan renounced once and for all the thousands of nuclear warheads deployed in their territories and joined the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. Libya followed recently by making a strategic decision to abandon all of its WMD programmes. Without the moral and normative weight of the NPT, such impressive achievements would have been unlikely.

However, such good news is overshadowed by the unprecedented challenges that the NPT faces today. The integrity and credibility of the Treaty have suffered an irreparable blow as a result of North Korea's complete disregard for and defiance of all nuclear non-proliferation norms and announcement of withdrawal from the Treaty. The North Korean nuclear issue poses an unacceptable threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia and beyond. The NPT has demonstrated its inherent limitations in dealing with such an intractable challenge from a determined proliferator. While the NPT regime has enhanced security elsewhere in the world, the Korean Peninsula suffers from diminished security because of the miserable failure of the NPT to contain the nuclear specter.

While North Korea's return to the Treaty and compliance with its Treaty and safeguards obligations should be integral to any negotiated settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue, the fact is that such steps alone are far from sufficient for resolving our fundamental proliferation concerns. We remain committed to the Six-Party Talks as the best means of resolving this issue. However, nothing short of Pyongyang's strategic decision to abandon and dismantle once and for all its entire

nuclear weapons programmes will bring about a breakthrough in the Six-Party Talks.

The disclosure of an extensive illicit nuclear procurement network run by Dr. A. Q. Khan came as a sobering wake-up call to the real danger of fissile materials and sensitive technologies or even nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands. While we applaud the successful countering of the clandestine network, the fact that such a nuclear black market could flourish under the shadow of the NPT regime brings to light the inadequacies and loopholes of the global nonproliferation regime based on the NPT.

In this connection, we welcome the Security Council's prompt action to deal resolutely with the illicit trafficking of WMD and related materials involving non-state actors through the adoption of Resolution 1540, which closed an important loophole in the existing non-proliferation regimes. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to expect Resolution 1540 or any other initiative to put an end to illicit nuclear trafficking. One should never underestimate the resourcefulness of black market peddlers and determined proliferators to outsmart and outmaneuver governments.

Another daunting challenge to the NPT comes from a fundamental loophole of the Treaty that allows determined proliferators to come to the brink of nuclear weapons capability without technically violating the Treaty. The Treaty provides the right to States Parties to acquire and operate a full range of fuel cycle activities, including uranium enrichment and the reprocessing of spent fuel, which can readily produce fissile materials usable for nuclear weapons. This right can be abused by potential proliferators intent on developing their nuclear weapons capabilities under the guise of purportedly peaceful nuclear energy programmes.

If such proliferators are allowed to break out from the Treaty with impunity once they have acquired all the necessary materials and technologies to manufacture nuclear weapons, ironically enough the NPT would end up serving their nuclear ambitions. That is why we believe that the formality of compliance should not be allowed to defeat the substance of non-proliferation objectives.

These multiple challenges confronting the NPT are creating a crisis of confidence in the Treaty itself. They demand a concerted response from the international community as a whole. In this context, the Republic of Korea wishes to make the following points.

First and foremost, the NPT must be supplemented and strengthened to fit the realities of the 21st century. In this regard, it is crucial to enhance the verification authority and capabilities of the IAEA through the universalization of the Additional Protocol. Universal application of the Additional Protocol will certainly enhance the level of confidence in the compliance of States Parties with their non-proliferation obligations. Higher confidence in compliance is the key to expanded peaceful use of nuclear technology. In this regard, we believe that the Additional Protocol should be a condition of nuclear supply to non-nuclear weapon States. As such, it should also be made a new global safeguards and verification standard.

In February 2004, the Republic of Korea became the 39th country to ratify the Additional Protocol. We urge those States Parties which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol at the earliest possible date.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Korea places the utmost value on the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As a country that depends on nuclear energy for 40 percent of its electric power supply and has the world's sixth largest civil nuclear energy industry, with 19 power reactors in operation and many more under construction, we view this inalienable right as indispensable to our sustainable development. Nevertheless, there should be proper safeguards against the possible abuse of this right by potential proliferators. The right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy under Article IV of the Treaty is not absolute, but conditioned upon compliance with non-proliferation and safeguards obligations under Articles II and III.

In this context, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to export controls over technologies and items of proliferation potential as a practical means of closing the existing loopholes in the NPT. We support the leading role of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in setting international norms for export controls and underscore the need for the establishment and effective implementation of national systems of export controls, as called for by UN Security Council Resolution 1540.

In view of the direct proliferation danger associated with sensitive fuel cycle technologies and facilities, we recognize the need to control their transfer, particularly to countries of proliferation concern or those countries that have no legitimate need for such technologies and facilities in terms of economic feasibility or energy security. We believe that iron-clad guarantees for the security of fuel supply at a reasonable price should be provided to those countries that voluntarily forego the possession of

sensitive fuel cycle facilities. We see no inconsistency between tightened export controls on the sensitive fuel cycle and the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. On the contrary, better export controls can in effect expand the peaceful use of nuclear energy by reducing the risk of proliferation.

In this connection, we commend IAEA Director General ElBaradei for recognizing the need to address this issue by commissioning the report of the independent Expert Group on Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle. We welcome this report and look forward to extensive discussions on this issue.

The normative efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and the supply-side approach based on export controls will work best when they are supplemented by a demand-side approach that addresses the root causes of proliferation. As incentives for proliferation often originate from the sense of insecurity, the resolution of regional conflicts, the easing of regional tensions, and the fostering of a peaceful global security environment are vital to non-proliferation.

In this regard, we recognize the important role that security assurances by nuclear weapon States can play in reducing the threat perceptions held by non-nuclear weapons States. We believe that those NNWS complying fully with their non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty are entitled to credible and reliable negative security assurances. We also recognize the utility of providing differentiated individual security assurances and other incentives to those States that accept additional non-proliferation commitments beyond their obligations under the NPT.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Korea reaffirms the vital importance of nuclear disarmament in realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. We welcome the significant progress made thus far in the reduction of nuclear arsenals and the commitments for further reductions under the Moscow Treaty. Nevertheless, we expect further steps for deeper cuts. At the heart of the problem of nuclear disarmament lies the perception gap between the record of nuclear-weapon States and the level of expectations held by non-nuclear-weapon States. The fact is that progress in disarmament has not matched the rapidly rising expectations of the post-Cold War era. Closing this perception gap will certainly provide nuclear-weapon States with the moral authority and the political legitimacy to strengthen non-proliferation norms while maintaining the delicate balance among the three main pillars of the NPT, which are mutually reinforcing.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms the importance and urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call upon all States that have not yet ratified the Treaty, particularly those eleven States whose ratification is required for its entry into force, to do so without further delay. Meanwhile, pending the entry into force of the CTBT, it is imperative to maintain the moratorium on nuclear test explosions.

At the same time, we call for prompt commencement of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and its early conclusion. We call upon all nuclear weapon States and the non-NPT States to declare and abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for any nuclear weapons pending the entry into force of the FMCT.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Korea calls upon the three States not yet party to the NPT to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states as soon as possible. While the importance of universal adherence to the NPT cannot be overemphasized, the prevention of its de-universalization is a new but no less pressing task. In this context, we share the need to revisit and complement the withdrawal provision of Article X of the Treaty. We remain open-minded to any constructive proposals with a view to making withdrawal more difficult, including the idea of requiring Security Council approval for a withdrawal.

We also share the concern that the NPT regime suffers from institutional deficit. We believe that the NPT needs better tools to respond more effectively and promptly to extraordinary and troubling situations involving threats to the Treaty. In this regard, we support Canada's proposal to adopt a new arrangement for an annual policy forum making the best use of the time currently allotted for the review process.

It is incumbent upon the NPT review process to restore the trust of the international community in the Treaty by responding effectively and in a timely manner to the mounting challenges to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We sincerely hope that this Conference will prove the vitality and effectiveness of the NPT review process by producing a meaningful outcome in the form of an agreed document outlining guidelines for future action to realize the goals the NPT.

Thank you.