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speeches

U.S. Opening Statement from IAEA General Conference

The following remarks were delivered by U.S. Ambassador, Gregory L. Schulte

Thank you, Mr. President. Secretary Bodman regrets that he was unable to be here in Vienna.

Secretary Bodman asked me to speak on his behalf, but he also taped a message for you.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I propose that we play the recorded message.

[Tape from U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman]

Mr. President ... Director General ElBaradei ...

I give you assurances that the United States delegation looks forward to working with you, the distinguished representatives of member states, and the Secretariat at this important meeting. For nearly 50 years, the IAEA has labored to promote two distinct, though intimately connected, goals.

One is promoting the safe and peaceful use of the atom, the idea being that the benefits of nuclear technologies will be extended to use in medicine, agriculture, and, of course, energy. The other goal, no less important, is preventing the proliferation of atomic materials and technologies that might be used for nefarious purposes.

As this organization nears its 50th anniversary, we must take special care to guard against complacency and to adjust to new realities as the post-September 11th world takes shape.

The dangers of nuclear proliferation are those we must approach with an even greater urgency, one that demands a heightened seriousness.

The new millennium has brought with it new demands and expectations in the rush of societies to modernize and globalize.

The simple fact is that the need for peaceful nuclear power all over the globe has never been more apparent while, at the same time, the proliferation and security threats posed by nuclear power's expansion have never been graver.

For these reasons, the International Atomic Energy Agency must play an even more vital role in its second half-century than it did in its first.

As important as nuclear power has been to the 20th century, it will be far more critical to meeting the world's energy needs in the 21st.

Energy is necessary for engines of economic growth, a key to raising living standards. Indeed, a key to raising nations and regions out of poverty.

Estimates indicate that world net electricity demand will nearly double over the next two decades, with more than half of the growth coming in the world's emerging economies.

The key questions facing policy makers, industry officials, scientists, economists, academics, and others are these: How should the world meet this huge growth in demand? And how can we do so in a way that protects the environment?

A big part of the answer, it seems clear, is nuclear power. My government believes that nuclear power will – that it *must* – play an enlarged role to meet the global demand for clean, affordable, safe and reliable sources of energy.

As a consequence, we are taking dramatic steps to lay the groundwork for an expansion of nuclear power.

We have recently seen a response from industry that should result in new reactor orders.

Last month, President Bush signed the 2005 Energy Policy Act. This landmark legislation will facilitate the first significant addition of nuclear power capacity in the United States in decades.

By streamlining licensing processes and creating incentives for industry, we intend to field new, advanced light water reactors by the end of this decade.

We are also working through the Generation IV International Forum to accelerate development of advanced nuclear energy systems – systems that offer significant improvements in energy efficiency, sustainability, and safety and proliferation resistance, and that we hope can and will provide tangible benefits to the developing world.

The IAEA's International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles - INPRO for short - can also bring innovative nuclear systems to fruition and the benefits of nuclear power can be spread around the planet in a manner that protects the environment for future generations.

But we know that grand ideas about expanding the peaceful usage of nuclear energy will mean nothing if we don't better and more fully embrace the second great responsibility of this organization – preventing the proliferation of nuclear technologies, materials, and know-how that might be put to evil ends.

The two ideas – promotion and prevention – are intertwined. We cannot have the first without the second. So a special onus falls on all of us to strengthen a nonproliferation regime that has worked well for fifty years

But, in some respects, not well enough.

One only has to look at the situations with North Korea, Iran, and the A.Q. Khan network for evidence of that claim.

Their pernicious and defiant misuse of nuclear technology – in direct violation of the nonproliferation regime – poses the greatest test of this organization, and of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We welcome the agreement at the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks on a Joint Statement of Principles for a diplomatic resolution to the DPRK nuclear issues. North Korea committed to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and return to an early date to the NPT and to IAEA safeguards.

In exchange, the other parties offered major benefits to North Korea, including energy assistance and steps toward normalized relations.

North Korea understands what it needs to do to achieve those benefits and end the isolation that results from its own flagrant violations of its nonproliferation commitments.

We look forward to rapid progress and prompt action to implement the commitments in the Joint Statement and we call on the DPRK to refrain from steps that would be contrary to the objectives of the Joint Statement, including further fissile material production, nuclear testing, and transfers of nuclear material and technology.

The case of Iran is no less urgent.

Saturday's finding of non-compliance sends a clear message that Iran's actions are isolating it from the international community and that Iran must take action to come into compliance with its international obligations and to give the world confidence that its nuclear programs are truly peaceful.

We stand behind the initiative of our European partners to seek a long-term agreement with Iran. Their proposal respects Iran's desire to use nuclear energy for civil purposes, as President Bush reaffirmed on September 14, but first requests that Iran agree not to pursue the development of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities.

Let me remind everyone that these capabilities are neither necessary – given Iran's massive oil and gas reserves – nor are they legitimate – given Iran's long record of safeguards violations.

Iran has created a crisis by abusing the NPT and concealing its nuclear ambitions.

Iran claims that it is being denied its inalienable right to nuclear energy and peaceful nuclear applications, but that right is dependent on also complying with Articles I and II of the NPT. Iran, by virtue of its noncompliance, has forfeited its right to peaceful nuclear cooperation.

By virtue of its long history of deception and concealment, Iran is a special case that requires special measures to ensure the international community that Iran will not subvert so-called "peaceful use" for military ends.

But the case of Iran also illustrates a point repeatedly made by the UN Secretary-General and our own Director General: The need to stop the further spread of technologies, like enrichment and reprocessing, that pose a high risk of proliferation, but that themselves do not need to be proliferated for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

My Government recognizes the proud achievements and potential of the Iranian people and the Iranian nation, but the regime in Tehran should take immediate steps to re-impose the suspension on its enrichment and reprocessing programs and return to negotiations with the EU-3.

We will also not lose sight of the IAEA's critical role in Iran. It is only through almost three years of vigorous IAEA investigations, following identification of the illicit facilities by Iranian dissidents, that the 20-year history of Iran's safeguards violations came to light.

We applaud the IAEA's work, but as Dr. ElBaradei himself has said, the IAEA must be provided proactive cooperation and transparency by Iran in order to determine whether Iran has been undertaking undeclared nuclear activities or diverting materials.

We hope the General Conference, building on Saturday's Board resolution, will call upon Iran to provide this critical transparency and fuller cooperation.

The United States is committed to helping responsible governments develop and continue peaceful nuclear programs without placing unreasonable conditions on them.

The United States has nuclear cooperation agreements with some 45 countries and is the largest contributor to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Program, having provided \$130 million since 2000 for projects in over 100 member states.

The examples I have just cited prove the need for shoring up the international nonproliferation regime.

They also prove the need for viewing these and other issues through the lens of nuclear energy's future, and its orderly, safe, and secure expansion. My government believes it is necessary to establish a dialogue among advanced and aspiring nuclear energy states on prerequisites for nuclear energy development.

These discussions should consider rational economic and energy planning, development goals, protection of

nuclear assets against misuse or sabotage, and nonproliferation performance.

Fifty years after Atoms for Peace ushered in the nuclear age, we are seeing a resurgence of a worldview of nuclear power as a clean, affordable source of energy.

But to realize this promise, States must have the necessary infrastructure for operating plants in a safe, secure manner and under appropriate nonproliferation conditions.

To advance this dialogue, I am pleased to announce today that the United States will join the IAEA's INPRO project with a view to using innovative thinking to address the framework requirements of tomorrow.

We look forward to engaging with states that act in strict conformity with nonproliferation requirements set by the international community.

It was in precisely this spirit that the leaders of the United States and India issued a Joint Statement earlier this year drawing our great democracies closer, in recognition that this enhanced relationship can make an important contribution to global stability, democracy, prosperity, and peace.

In this historic Joint Statement, President Bush and Prime Minister Singh announced that the United States will work to achieve full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India in return for India's reciprocal commitment to assume the same responsibilities and practices as other leading nations with advanced nuclear technology.

These include: adhering to the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Missile Technology Control Regime, separating its civil and military facilities and programs in a phased manner and filing a declaration regarding its civilian facilities with the IAEA, placing its civilian facilities under IAEA safeguards, signing and adhering to an Additional Protocol, continuing its unilateral nuclear testing moratorium, working with the U.S. for the conclusion of a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, and refraining from the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states that do not have them and supporting efforts to limit their spread.

Fulfilling its agreed nonproliferation commitments will bring India closer to the mainstream of the international nuclear nonproliferation community and open the door to a cleaner and more secure energy future.

This initiative will help India's economy gain access to the energy it requires to continue its 8 percent growth rate, without increased dependence on dirty, greenhouse-gas emitting coal.

The international community will also benefit from increased collaboration and cooperation with India's civil nuclear community, which has indigenously developed an advanced nuclear energy program from which we can surely learn a great deal.

An orderly expansion of nuclear energy use globally will require more than dialogue.

It will require that we act today to limit opportunities tomorrow for terrorists or proliferants to turn the peaceful fruits of our labor into nuclear or radiological weapons.

In that regard, I would like to propose a four-part nuclear security agenda for the 21st century.

This agenda embraces steps toward institutional improvements and other changes to strengthen the authority of the IAEA. It also will require broader cooperation across the international spectrum.

The first part of this nuclear security agenda is to strengthen controls on enrichment and reprocessing technology, like the ongoing restraint agreed to by the G8 at Gleneagles, Scotland earlier this year.

The United States will continue to work for agreement in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

We will also work to ensure that states renouncing enrichment and reprocessing have reliable access to fuel for civil nuclear power reactors.

We are working with major suppliers and the IAEA on a back-up supply mechanism, for states that forgo investment in indigenous enrichment or reprocessing capability.

We recognize that any back-up supply mechanism can be enhanced if a reserve of fuel is set aside.

The United States Department of Energy will reserve up to 17 metric tons of highly enriched uranium for an IAEA verifiable assured fuel supply arrangement from materials previously declared excess to national security needs.

We will also consider placing additional uranium that will soon be removed from our military stockpile in this reserve, and are examining other possible sources.

We encourage other nations to join us in this initiative.

The second major component of this new nuclear security agenda is to improve the IAEA's ability to monitor or enforce safeguards compliance.

We welcome the Board of Governors' decision to establish a Committee on Safeguards and Verification.

The work is before us. Let us get to it.

There is no doubt that the nonproliferation system needs to be strengthened. The reasons are apparent in the recent successes of countries and illicit trafficking networks in circumventing existing safeguards.

The third element of this agenda is to improve controls on materials of greatest interest to terrorists or proliferators.

On this, I am pleased to report that our partnership with Russia is strong.

Earlier this year at Bratislava, Presidents Bush and Putin agreed to accelerate security upgrades at Russian sites holding weapons-usable materials and warheads.

And we are moving forward to eliminate surplus stocks of highly enriched uranium and military plutonium.

The United States is also consulting governments around the world to ensure that security for fissile materials is accorded the highest priority.

The adoption of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material is an important step forward. We hope that the Amendment can enter into force expeditiously.

We urge all States Parties to the Convention to ratify the Amendment as soon as possible and to consider acting in accordance with its purposes and provisions pending its entry into force.

We urge States not yet parties to the Convention to adhere to the Convention and the Amendment as soon as possible and, where necessary, to seek the assistance of the IAEA and its Member States in implementing those instruments.

A further goal must be to phase-out the commercial use of highly enriched uranium.

Such a phase-out has long been a pillar of U.S. nonproliferation policy.

We have enjoyed considerable success in this endeavor; having converted nearly 40 U.S. supplied research reactors from highly enriched uranium to a low enriched form of fuel that cannot be used in weapons.

We have also launched a similar initiative with Russia.

Moreover, the United States is prepared to join with others in establishing new, international guidelines on the management of HEU.

Such guidelines should involve all HEU users and the IAEA, and they should incorporate requirements for accounting and reporting of national stocks of civilian HEU; for strict standards for physical protection; for converting all remaining HEU reactors and isotope production to LEU; and for designing new civilian research reactors only to use LEU.

My Government and delegation look forward to consulting with the IAEA and its member states as this particular initiative moves forward.

The fourth and final part of this nuclear security agenda holds that states must fully exercise their responsibility to regulate nuclear activities under their jurisdiction and control.

That is a primary purpose underlying UN Security Resolution 1540, which, inter alia, obligates states to enact strict internal and external controls against proliferation, and to secure facilities and weapons-usable materials.

The universal implementation of Resolution 1540 is an immediate priority. Failure will only serve the interests of terrorists and predatory procurement networks that specialize in the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, materials and technology.

The agenda I have laid out is an ambitious one.

It will only be accomplished if IAEA member states agree to join with a unity of purpose and will.

The alternative – nuclear weapons, weapons-usable materials, and critical technologies proliferating across the globe – is an alternative that none of us should tolerate, and one that we must work tirelessly to avoid.

But let us be realistic. Even the best system of controls – by itself – cannot prevent the malicious use of the atom.

That security lies in the proliferation of a different breed – that of the global spread of democracy, human freedoms, and of prosperity fueled by clean, affordable nuclear energy.

It is our responsibility to answer in the affirmative when the question is asked: "Did we do enough? Did we make our fullest contribution towards a *safe* and *secure* nuclear future?"

Historians tomorrow will judge the actions we take today.

If we work together, if we redouble our commitment to this vital and necessary work, then I am confident we will be judged favorably.

Thank you.

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