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**U.S. Remarks to Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Committee**  
**Highlights international peace and security, combat spread of nuclear weapons**

(begin text)

U.S. Mission To The United Nations in Geneva  
United States Reducing Nuclear Weapons at an Extraordinary Pace  
Dr. Christopher A. Ford  
United States Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation

Opening Remarks to the 2008 NPT Preparatory Committee  
Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland  
April 28, 2008

**A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS AT THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was opened for signature four decades ago this summer. It stands today not just as a landmark treaty – the most widely adhered-to nonproliferation or arms control agreement in human history – but, much more importantly, as an important contributor to international peace and security. The NPT, and the broader nonproliferation regime of which it forms a vital part, powerfully serves the security interests of all its States Party by helping combat the further spread of nuclear weapons. This helps reduce the risk of catastrophic nuclear warfare, prevent the emergence of new nuclear arms races, and ensure that ongoing regional rivalries are not inflamed by States Party possessing nuclear weapons. By accomplishing its core nonproliferation purpose, the NPT also powerfully serves the interest of the other goals to which States Party committed themselves in the Treaty's text, including promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and progress toward nuclear disarmament.

The world today is vastly safer and more secure than the one in which the NPT was opened for signature, and part of the reason for this has been the success of States Party in ensuring compliance with the nonproliferation obligations that during the NPT's negotiation were referred to as "the core of the Treaty." (see footnote)

States' commitments to preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons have led to profound successes. Even during the height of the Cold War – when the NPT nuclear weapons states (NWS) possessed vast arsenals of nuclear weapons, and the danger of nuclear warfare on a global scale loomed large over all mankind – States Party to the Treaty recognized their strong shared interests in preventing further nuclear proliferation. Despite the tensions of that period – and predictions by U.S. President John Kennedy that the world would probably have between 15 and 20 nuclear weapons states even by the end of the 1960s – several nascent nuclear weapons efforts in various countries around the world were quietly shut down. Despite such predictions, a clear commitment to nonproliferation ensured that proliferation was slowed from its anticipated sprint to a mere crawl. Such successes helped prevent a perilous Cold War world from becoming much more dangerous still. They also helped preserve the foundation for progress on other significant Treaty goals, most prominently peaceful uses and disarmament.

But while remembering these successes, we must not be complacent. After all, treaties' effectiveness depends upon the collective willpower and commitment of their sovereign States Party to their goals. Despite tremendous progress in fulfilling other key goals of the NPT – in slashing the nuclear arsenals of almost all the NWS, including the two former superpower adversaries, and in widely sharing the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology – the international community has been struggling

with proliferation challenges from Iranian and North Korean nuclear weapons ambitions that so far do not yet seem to have been abandoned. To be sure, the nonproliferation regime recently had a notable success in Libya's decision in 2003 to abandon its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs – which helped that country end its damaging isolation from the international community. So far, however, the jury is still out on whether the NPT regime will be able to meet today's challenges. It is imperative for States Party to work together more effectively to fulfill the Treaty's central purpose of preventing nuclear weapons proliferation. Upon this hinges the prospects for continuing peaceful nuclear technology cooperation, and for achieving both Treaty universality and eventual nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman, as we approach the half-way point of this NPT Review Cycle, what can be said about the progress States Party have been making? How can we all work together to help the Treaty survive the challenges it faces and live up to the hopes invested in it by governments around the world? Let me first summarize the progress that the United States sees occurring in key issue areas, before outlining what we believe to be the best road ahead.

#### Peaceful Uses

With respect to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the period since the end of the 2005 NPT Review Cycle has seen some real progress. Specifically, there has been an increasing recognition of two critical points – and a growing understanding of how to resolve the apparent tension between them.

First, there is wide international understanding that the proliferation of the capability to produce fissile material usable in nuclear weapons poses grave dangers to the nonproliferation regime. The difficulty in obtaining fissile material is the principal obstacle to developing nuclear weapons, and the unchecked or unsafeguarded acquisition of material-production capabilities by countries with potential nuclear weapons ambitions is antithetical to the cause of nonproliferation. The spread of such capabilities would also require more resources and capabilities for the safeguards regime, which would need to provide warning of diversion timely enough to permit effective responses, and to ensure against the absence of undeclared nuclear material production in countries that possess the requisite technology.

Second, there is wide international appreciation that it is not enough for the current level of international nuclear energy cooperation to continue. It must actually be intensified in order to help mankind meet its skyrocketing energy needs in ways that minimize further damage to the environment while increasing energy security. This, too, will present resource and technological challenges to the safeguards system, as larger and larger numbers of nuclear facilities come on line around the world. More importantly, however, because reactors require fuel, and because fuel production has to occur somewhere, these two factors might seem to create a tension – dividing the NPT against itself on an article-by-article basis with peaceful use concerns pitted against the interests of the Treaty's nonproliferation core.

This, however, need not be the case, for promoting peaceful nuclear cooperation need not entail subverting the central object of the Treaty. In fact, recent progress on these fronts highlights the very real possibility that States Party will be able – as U.S. President Bush and Russian President Putin put it in July 2007 – to expand nuclear energy in a way that strengthens the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Building upon President Bush's 2004 initiative, the United States has been moving forward with programs such as the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) – efforts designed to expand international nuclear cooperation in proliferation-responsible ways, and to provide such attractive and responsible cooperative alternatives that countries offered the chance to participate will not choose to pursue enrichment and reprocessing technology (ENR). Closely linked to such undertakings have been multilateral proposals by many of the major nuclear fuel suppliers, working with the IAEA, to develop an even more robust and reliable international system of fuel supply that will help remove any perceived need for more countries to develop ENR capabilities of their own. The United States looks forward to working with all countries, along with the IAEA, to develop further the concept of reliable fuel supply.

Moreover, efforts by Iran to play upon some countries' sincere concerns about technology access to justify its own activities in violation of safeguards and the NPT have been encountering increasing resistance during this Review Cycle. In contrast to the end of the 2005 Review Cycle, there is less rhetoric about the alleged "denial of inalienable rights" and more legitimate debate about the concrete benefits and technical merits of fuel-supply programs and GNEP-style cooperation predicated

upon countries' voluntary forbearance with respect to fuel-cycle technology. The NPT forum thus may be moving from a deliberately polarized and misleading discourse about "denial of rights" to a more constructive one focusing upon the availability of proliferation-responsible alternatives. That is indeed progress – and a potential path to the resolution of much of the seeming tension between Articles II and IV.

#### Disarmament

At the end of the 2005 Review Cycle, some NPT States Party apparently held the belief – promoted by Iran and others – that the NPT nuclear weapons states (NWS) somehow had backtracked on their commitment to the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament, and that they were in violation of their obligations under Article VI. With respect to United States nuclear posture and policy, any such beliefs are patently false. By simply laying out the facts, we believe we have made progress in correcting misperceptions and allaying concerns.

Happily, Mr. Chairman, States Party today better understand the United States' exemplary progress. The numbers speak for themselves: we now have reduced our operationally-deployed strategic nuclear weapons from over 10,000 to under 3,000 today. We have accelerated our rates of warhead dismantlement, and are on our way toward dismantling three out of every four of all the many thousands of U.S. nuclear weapons that were in existence at the end of the Cold War, bringing our arsenal down to its lowest levels since the 1950s. We continue to: reduce the number of delivery systems; eliminate entire classes of weapons such as intermediate-range missiles and nuclear artillery shells; remove many hundreds of tons of fissile material from our weapons programs; maintain our moratorium on underground nuclear testing; help peacefully dispose of hundreds of tons of fissile material from former Soviet nuclear weapons; fulfill our promises to slash non-strategic nuclear forces; build a new plant to convert large quantities of plutonium from former U.S. nuclear weapons into nuclear reactor fuel; refrain from producing new uranium or plutonium for nuclear weapons; and work to bring about the complete, global prohibition of fissile material production for use in nuclear weapons.

States Party also better understand that the United States' story of disarmament progress is not just about numbers. They know we have been moving to reduce reliance upon nuclear weapons by improving our means to accomplish strategic deterrence through a "New Triad" that includes the development of non-nuclear capabilities, active and passive defenses, and a responsive production capability that will allow the United States to adopt its weapons needs based on evolving requirements – and which is already helping us move toward a posture in which we can reduce the number of nuclear warheads in existence as we feel less need to maintain as many of them as a "hedge" against unforeseen changes in the strategic threat environment or technical surprise. States Party know that the United States remains firmly and unequivocally committed to the disarmament goals of the Preamble and Article VI of the NPT, and indeed that we have become a leading contributor to international discussions of how to move forward toward those ends. Through these efforts, we are creating the conceptual and infrastructural foundations for meeting the shared goal of a future world that is not merely free of nuclear weapons, but that can remain so because would-be proliferators are unlikely to win significant strategic benefits by "breaking out" of a disarmament regime.

Thanks to these efforts and to those of some of the other NWS, Article VI discourse is now gradually arriving at the place where disarmament debate should have been all along. In short, astonishing progress has already been achieved and is continuing, most of the NWS are becoming increasingly accustomed to a constructive degree of voluntary transparency about nuclear matters, and there seems to be a growing interest in realistic and practical discussions about the possibility of nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, the first portion of the 2010 NPT Review Cycle should be counted as a success for anyone who is serious about the cause of disarmament.

#### Nonproliferation

With regard to non-proliferation – the overarching purpose of the NPT, and the foundation upon which of the objectives of peaceful uses and disarmament rest – the record is mixed. It is not clear that all States Party in the NPT regime are as strongly committed to nonproliferation today than at the end of the 2005 Review Cycle, and some may be less so.

To be sure, the unchecked spread of ENR technology would create the risk of "latent" or "virtual" nuclear weapons programs in countries of concern, and is a

focus of growing worry. The world has become appropriately alarmed about Iran's rush to produce fissile materials for reactors it does not have in order to prevent an "energy crisis" it does not face – particularly given that Iran lacks the domestic uranium reserves to support the "independent" commercial program it claims to desire. There is also a growing appreciation for the importance of ensuring that nuclear safeguards will provide warning of fissile material diversion in time to permit an effective response by members of a fractious and cumbersome multilateral regime – a task that will require special attention as the use of nuclear energy for civil power generation expands worldwide, and if any additional countries acquire ENR.

But the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs continue to pose serious challenges to the international nuclear nonproliferation regime. It is encouraging that the international community has just adopted a third resolution in the United Nations Security Council, requiring that Iran suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities and imposing additional sanctions in the wake of that regime's continued contempt for international law and for the multilateral institutions in which the United States and so many other countries have placed their hopes for meeting proliferation challenges.

With regard to North Korea, much additional work still needs to be done to achieve the vision of the September 2005 Joint Statement, under which the DPRK committed to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and return, at an early date, to the NPT and to IAEA safeguards as a non-nuclear weapons state. One can only be alarmed, for instance, that North Korea collaborated with a State Party to the NPT – a country, Mr. Chairman, subject to the nonproliferation obligations of Article II and Article III of the Treaty – to construct a nuclear reactor in that country, a reactor not intended for peaceful purposes and which was developed covertly and in violation of the very procedures designed to reassure the world of the peaceful intent of nuclear activities. Nonetheless, the Six-Party process has resulted in important initial steps toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and we are working with our partners to achieve the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The United States is committed to ensuring that North Korea does not further engage in proliferation activities, and we will work with our partners to establish in the Six-Party Framework a rigorous verification mechanism to ensure that such conduct and other nuclear activities have ceased.

While we have seen evidence that sustained international solidarity in compliance enforcement can produce changes in a proliferator's behavior, however, the international nonproliferation regime clearly needs to do better in the future. If delegations to the 2010 Review Conference cannot look back and conclude that the Treaty regime contributed to the successful resolution of these proliferation challenges, the future of the NPT will dim.

What Next for 2010?

As we all work to ensure that the 2010 Review Conference represents a successful conclusion to this cycle, we should build upon the model presented by last year's ably-chaired Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting. At the first PrepCom, the States Party demonstrated admirable solidarity in the face of cynical efforts by one country to impede multilateral responses to proliferation challenges by sidetracking and obstructing NPT deliberations. The meeting even enjoyed a period, however brief, of valuable substantive debate, which laid the foundation for further constructive discussions here this year.

With regard to the next Review Conference, the United States in 2007 outlined an ambitious work plan that we believe should help all States Party structure their approaches to achieving a constructive Final Document in 2010. I encourage you to review it, for the United States believes that the substantive proposals set out in that work plan still remain the strongest foundation upon which to build consensus for an effective Final Document in 2010.

As we all work toward agreement, however, we should remember that it may not be possible to reach consensus in 2010 upon a comprehensive text that covers every detail of every issue currently confronting the NPT regime. If we make the "perfect the enemy of the good," as the saying goes, we will have only ourselves to blame if the Review Conference is accounted a "failure." The United States believes we can reach agreement on some very significant issues in a Final Document of more limited scope and debate issues upon which Treaty parties continue to disagree (for indeed it is important to have such debate).

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The United States believes that the best recipe for success in 2010 is for us at this meeting – and in 2009 – to develop areas that are (or can become) “ripe” for agreement at the Review Conference. Certain issues, we believe, already stand out in this regard.

- All States Party should be able to agree in 2010 upon the critical importance of ensuring strict compliance with all articles of the NPT. The adoption of the agenda at last year’s Preparatory Committee indicates that the basis for such agreement already exists.
- We believe most States Party can agree upon the importance of promoting and indeed expanding international nuclear cooperation for peaceful purposes in ways consistent with nonproliferation principles. In this way, the integrity of the nonproliferation regime can be preserved, while helping mankind better enjoy the benefits of nuclear power in a world of staggering energy demand and increasing environmental degradation through the use of fossil fuels. Many different detailed proposals have been advanced as to how best to do this – particularly with respect to ensuring an even more robust and reliable supply of nuclear fuel – but we believe that there is broad agreement on the principle that some such solution is necessary.
- We believe that most States Party can agree upon the importance of taking steps to deter – and, if necessary, to respond to – withdrawal from the NPT by states that are in violation of its provisions. This is not an issue of denying them their right to withdraw, for that is enshrined in Article X, but rather of making it more difficult for violators to use the withdrawal mechanism to escape accountability for their violations.
- We believe that States Party can agree upon the importance of swift and effective responses to Treaty violations. What those mechanisms will be may be the subject of debate and discussion, but it is clear that we need to develop more effective approaches so that the delay between detection and reaction is minimized, the cost to the violator is increased, and the anticipated benefits of noncompliance to the violator are reduced.
- We also believe that all would agree with a strong statement on the importance of ensuring strong and viable nuclear safeguards including the Additional Protocol – safeguards capable of providing warning of the diversion of nuclear material or technology in sufficient time to permit effective responses – even as a global “renaissance” in nuclear power generation expands the number of facilities operating worldwide. Facilities must be adequately safeguarded, and all nuclear technology and material must be protected against theft or misuse by non-state actors such as terrorists.
- In light of the great importance placed upon the issue in NPT fora, we believe it may be possible, and would be valuable, for States Party to reaffirm well-established principles – expressed, for instance, in the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East – regarding the importance of bringing about conditions in which it will be possible to rid that region of all WMD and delivery systems.
- We also believe that all States Party – not merely the nuclear weapons states, but naturally including them – should be able to reaffirm their commitment to the disarmament goals expressed in the Preamble and in Article VI of the Treaty. The details of how precisely to fulfill those goals, and when it would be realistic to expect this, may remain subject to some disagreement among reasonable people. But we hope that it will be possible – and believe that it would aid the smooth functioning of the nonproliferation regime – for States Party to reaffirm these commitments publicly and emphatically at the close of this Review Cycle.

These “building blocks,” we believe, can be the basis of a strong and constructive but realistic and achievable Final Document in 2010. The discussions in which we engage here over the next two weeks will help provide its substantive foundation. We in the United States look forward to these debates, and relish the chance to contribute to them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Footnote:

See, e.g., U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *International Negotiations on the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (Washington, D.C., 1969), at 81 (quoting Canadian representative Burns, in ENDC/PV.338, at 5-6); see also Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, process verbal,

ENDC/PV.378 (March 13, 1968), at 11.

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