



The U.S. Approach to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference

Stephen G. Rademaker, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to preview the Administration's approach to the NPT Review Conference, which opens next week at the United Nations.

The President's National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction lays out a comprehensive approach for countering the threat that the world's most destructive weapons could fall into in the hands of the world's most dangerous regimes or terrorists. In doing so, the National Strategy recognizes the valuable contribution of multilateral arms control and nonproliferation regimes to international peace and security. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) serves as a critical legal and normative barrier to nuclear proliferation.

The NPT entered into force in 1970. Today its membership is nearly universal, with close to 190 parties. The United States continues to emphasize the importance of universal adherence to and full compliance with the NPT. When the Treaty was conceived there were five nuclear weapon states and many were predicting as many as 20 to 25 additional states with nuclear weapons within the following 20 years. The NPT was the first major step to establish a global norm against further nuclear weapons proliferation. Thirty-five years later, there remain only a handful of additional states with nuclear weapons rather than the 20 to 25 once predicted. The threat of nuclear proliferation is still with us, however. It is compounded today by the determination of terrorists to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

We are especially troubled by the reality that several states seeking nuclear weapons in recent years have done so in violation of their solemn NPT undertaking to forswear nuclear weapons. Even worse, these NPT states party have close ties to terrorist organizations. As President Bush has stated on numerous occasions, the greatest threat facing humanity today is the nexus of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

NPT parties must recognize the challenges posed by today's security environment, and in particular, by the threat of noncompliance with the Treaty's nonproliferation obligations. We must act to ensure that the NPT continues to play an effective role in thwarting nuclear proliferation in the 21st century. Failure to do so will not only weaken the Treaty, but also undermine global security. Technology is spreading and illegal procurement networks threaten to thwart efforts to keep nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of those determined to acquire and use them.

The seventh conference to review the operation of the NPT begins next week in New York. The central message of the United States, as stated by President Bush in his March 7 statement on the 35th anniversary of the NPT, will be to urge strong action to confront the threat posed by NPT noncompliance. The President said such action was necessary to preserve and strengthen the Treaty's nonproliferation undertakings; he called on all parties to act promptly and effectively.

NPT parties must demand that existing cases of noncompliance be resolved. In recent years, four NPT parties have sought nuclear weapons in violation of their nonproliferation obligations. In December 2003, Libya made the strategic choice to renounce weapons of mass destruction and to fulfill its obligations under the NPT. Iraq's new government has also pledged to honor international nonproliferation conventions.

But North Korea continues to threaten the world. Since the last Review Conference in 2000, it expelled international inspectors, announced its withdrawal from the NPT, and, most recently, claimed to have manufactured nuclear weapons. The Conference should condemn North Korea's egregious behavior. North Korea must cease and declare all past nuclear activity and dismantle its nuclear programs completely, verifiably and irreversibly. We will seek support for a continuation of the Six Party Talks as the current best approach for resolving this issue peacefully through negotiation.

Since 2000, we also learned of the numerous NPT violations committed by Iran, in the course of that country's clandestine pursuit of nuclear weapons over the past two decades. Iran refuses to abandon its effort, despite numerous IAEA Board of Governors resolutions calling on Iran to adhere to its obligations and fully disclose its activities. Iran will attend the Conference and will be a great source of controversy and division. The Iranian regime will attempt to justify its two decades of lying and of failing to disclose its nuclear activities, while claiming the right to have sensitive nuclear technology despite its violations. Of course, Iran has no legitimate need for this technology. We will document Iran's long history of deception and violations. Any casual reading of IAEA reports and resolutions dealing with Iran's safeguards obligations over the past few years will reveal countless failures, breaches and violations. Iran hid behind the NPT for many years while it claimed to have only a peaceful nuclear program. The United States supports the EU-3 [European Union-Three: France, Germany, and Britain] effort to obtain certain objective guarantees that Iran is not trying to use a civilian nuclear program to provide cover for a weapons program.

The Review Conference should address ways to strengthen the NPT against future violations. We will encourage a discussion of the Treaty's nonproliferation undertakings and of actions parties can take to ensure compliance with their obligations. We will suggest ways to hold violators accountable. We will insist that enforcement of the Article II prohibition on the manufacture of nuclear weapons must begin at an early stage of the process leading to such manufacture.

Important work to adapt the broader nonproliferation regime to today's challenges is already underway in fora such as the IAEA, the G8, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the UN Security Council. These efforts must yield more effective tools to deter and stop future nuclear proliferation. The Review Conference can assist by providing a strong political boost to this work. To this end, the United States will highlight and build support for the President's initiatives to combat proliferation.

In remarks delivered at the National Defense University in February 2004, President Bush called for passage of what became UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which was adopted on April 28, 2004. This resolution requires all states to establish effective controls over material, equipment and technology related to weapons of mass destruction. In this speech the President also called for an expansion of the Proliferation Security Initiative, which is designed to promote international cooperation to interdict shipments of WMD materials consistent with national legal authorities and international law and frameworks. We will urge support for both of these initiatives.

The United States also is seeking to strengthen the IAEA in combating nuclear proliferation. We are supporting universal adherence to the IAEA Additional Protocol and urging the creation of a special committee of the IAEA Board of Governors to consider ways to improve verification and enforcement of safeguards agreements. At the Conference, we also will highlight the responsibility of the Security Council in dealing with nuclear proliferation cases that endanger international peace and security. The Council must be more active in discharging its role in this area.

Nuclear fuel cycle issues will be a prominent topic at the Conference. As you know, enrichment and reprocessing can be used in peaceful nuclear programs. But some NPT parties have sought this technology secretly in pursuit of nuclear weapons and in violation of their Treaty obligations. Iran now insists on retaining the enrichment capabilities it acquired through Treaty violations. The resulting issues have been a matter of considerable international debate over the last two years. In his remarks on February 11, 2004, President Bush highlighted the inherent vulnerability of the NPT with regard to certain nuclear technologies and called on the members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to refuse to sell enrichment and reprocessing equipment and technologies to any state that does not already possess full-scale, functioning enrichment or reprocessing plants. Both United Nations Secretary General Annan and IAEA Director General ElBaradei also have recognized the need to reduce the proliferation risk of these technologies.

While many agree on these dangers, there is no consensus yet as to the ultimate solution. Of course, the economics of today's fuel cycle do not support the entry of additional countries into the enrichment or reprocessing business. There is very little interest in reprocessing at the present time; and no NPT non-nuclear-weapon state without a full-scale, functioning enrichment plant has plans to pursue such a capability, except of course for Iran and North Korea who did so in violation of the Treaty. The fact is countries with enrichment facilities can adequately handle the foreseeable demand for reactor fuel. NPT parties without these facilities can continue to enjoy the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy without possessing enrichment and reprocessing facilities. Meanwhile, existing technology holders must clamp down to ensure against any leakage to proliferators. At the Conference, the United States will raise awareness of the need for measures to strengthen the NPT by closing this loophole. Multilateral action on this issue is being considered in the G8 and the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

While many parties will join us in highlighting the central threat that noncompliance poses to the Treaty, some non-nuclear weapons states will draw attention to what they claim is the slow pace of progress on the NPT's nuclear disarmament-related obligations. For its part, the United States will promote its excellent record on nuclear disarmament, including the reductions of U.S. operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads. We initiated these reductions unilaterally, and legally obligated ourselves to make them under the Moscow Treaty of 2002. By 2012, we will have 80% fewer strategic warheads deployed than at the end of the Cold War. We will also highlight at the Review Conference the \$9 billion we have spent in destroying the WMD remnants of the former Soviet Union through such efforts as the Nunn-Lugar program. Along with our partners in the G8 Global Partnership, we pledged in 2002 to raise an additional \$20 billion for such programs over the next 10 years, including \$10 billion to be provided by the United States. We also will correct misunderstandings of the Nuclear Posture Review in order to draw attention to the President's path-breaking policies to reduce U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons. These policies are not drawing the attention and support they deserve.

Some of the concern expressed to date in the NPT review process about the pace of nuclear disarmament has dangerous overtones. Some states suggest that strengthening the Treaty's nonproliferation provisions should be linked to greater progress on nuclear disarmament. This point of view is fraught with risks, not least of which is to appear to excuse proliferation by blaming those who lawfully possess nuclear weapons under the NPT. Such thinking is confused and wrong. If it is accepted, it weakens nonproliferation. It must be vigorously countered. It is particularly ironic that such linkages are being espoused at a time of historic reductions in nuclear weapons by the United States and Russia.

We are using several public diplomacy tools to advance our objectives, including meeting with the press and NGOs, the publication of several pamphlets, the distribution of an on-line journal overseas, and other means. An informed international community is essential if the NPT's rules against nuclear proliferation are to be preserved and strengthened. \

There will be differences at the Conference among parties; some will be quite substantial. It is important for all states party to remember that the Review Conference is not an implementing body and that any decisions will not be legally-binding. However, it can serve to focus world attention on current challenges and to build political support for appropriate remedies, many of which require action in other international fora. With this in mind, the United States will encourage all participants not to allow disagreements to undermine the important task of reinforcing the role of the NPT in building a safer and more secure world. A weakened NPT would increase the dangers facing all nations. With good will and realistic expectations among the participants, the United States believes the Conference can help to build confidence in the NPT and to promote broader international cooperation in countering proliferation.

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