



U.S. Implementation of Article VI and the Future of Nuclear Disarmament

Ambassador Jackie W. Sanders, Special Representative of the President for the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Introduction

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to address Main Committee I to present U.S. views on Article VI of the Treaty. The United States values these opportunities to volunteer information on its policies, activities, and achievements contributing to the universal implementation of all substantive articles of the Treaty, including Article VI. The United States is fully committed to the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty], and believes that all states must comply with the obligations of the Treaty. The United States takes all of its treaty obligations seriously, including those in Article VI, and is in full compliance with this article. As Article VI obligations extend to all States Parties, nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon alike, we look forward to learning about how others are advancing the goals of Article VI.

Mr. Chairman, the United States recognizes its Article VI commitments. We note, too, that the pace and nature of progress toward nuclear disarmament depends on the state of the international security environment. To that end, perhaps some discussion of the broader context is in order.

A Changed World

Mr. Chairman, the nuclear arms race referred to in Article VI is over. The United States and Russia have altered their fundamental relationship, and the drawdown of the nuclear weapons built up during the Cold War has been under way for almost two decades. The prospect of a global nuclear war that rightfully preoccupied the international community thirty-five years ago is at its lowest ebb in the history of the nuclear age.

The easing of global tension and strengthening of trust has allowed the United States to undertake systematic, progressive, and effective measures consistent with Article VI. We have taken these actions unilaterally, bilaterally with the Russian Federation, and multilaterally within NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]. Unfortunately, in the face of this dramatic reduction of reliance on nuclear weapons, new proliferation challenges to international peace and security threaten us all. I speak in particular of the growing threat of terrorism involving the use of weapons of mass destruction, the alarming examples of certain States Parties violating their solemn nonproliferation commitments by seeking to acquire nuclear weapons or the means for their production, and revelations of non-state actor involvement in the illegal trafficking of sensitive nuclear technology.

Mr. Chairman, since September 11, 2001, these dangers, more than any other, imperil international peace and security and the continued viability of the NPT. Endorsement by all parties of strong international measures to confront these proliferation threats must be the primary objective of the 2005 Review Conference.

The U.S. Article VI Record

Mr. Chairman, the United States is committed to implementing NPT Article VI and by any measure, United States actions over the past 20 years have established an enviable record of Article VI compliance. Consider these significant, Article VI-related accomplishments:

Nuclear Weapon Reductions

- The United States has dismantled more than 13,000 nuclear weapons since 1988.
- When the START Treaty was signed in 1991, the United States and Russia each had deployed over 10,000 strategic warheads. Both reduced this level to below 6,000 by December 2001.
- United States and Russian operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads will be reduced further to 1,700-2,200 by December 31, 2012, as agreed by Presidents Bush and Putin and codified in the 2002 Moscow Treaty.
- Upon completion of the Moscow Treaty reductions, the U.S. will retain only about one-fifth of the strategic nuclear warheads that we had deployed in 1991.
- The overall United States nuclear stockpile is shrinking at the same time. In May 2004, President Bush approved a plan that will cut the stockpile by almost one-half from the 2001 level. By the end of 2012, the United States stockpile will be the smallest that it has been in several decades. These represent reductions by nearly a factor of four since the end of the Cold War.
- In total, United States non-strategic nuclear weapons in NATO have been reduced by nearly ninety percent (90%) since the fall of the Berlin Wall.
- The number of U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapon systems have been reduced from 13 to 2 -- one of which is not deployed under normal circumstances.
- United States Navy surface ships no longer deploy with nuclear weapons.
- In 1991, NATO based five different types of U.S. nuclear weapons on its soil. Only one type of these weapons remains in Europe today.
- Non-strategic nuclear weapon storage sites in Europe have been reduced by 80%.
- In 2003, the United States dismantled the last of 3,000 tactical nuclear warheads -- artillery shells, warheads for short-range missile systems, and Navy depth bombs -- in fulfillment of the 1991 Presidential Nuclear Initiatives.

Nuclear Delivery System Reductions

- Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has eliminated 1,032 launchers for strategic ballistic missiles, 350 heavy bombers, and 28 ballistic missile submarines. Those reductions continue today.
- In the last three years, four additional submarines have been taken out of strategic service and had their ballistic missiles removed.
- Forty-two Peacekeeper ICBMs [Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles] have been deactivated, with the 8 remaining missiles scheduled for deactivation by October 2005.

Controlling Fissile Material

- The United States has not enriched uranium for nuclear weapons since 1964, nor produced plutonium for nuclear weapons since 1988. Moreover, we do not have plans to produce these materials for nuclear weapons purposes in the future.
- The United States has removed 174 tons of highly-enriched uranium [HEU] and 52 tons of plutonium from further use as fissile material in nuclear warheads, placing some of this material under IAEA safeguards, and thus far converting approximately 60 tons irreversibly for use as civil reactor fuel.
- The United States and Russia have committed to dispose of 34 tons each of plutonium so that it is no longer usable for nuclear weapons. The United States is readying to begin construction of U.S. facilities for this purpose.
- Under the 1993 HEU Purchase Agreement, the United States and Russia have down-blended over 240 metric tons of HEU from Russian nuclear weapons.
- The United States supports the immediate commencement, in the Conference on Disarmament, of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, without verification.

Cooperative Threat Reduction

- Since 1992, the United States has expended more than \$9 billion in nonproliferation and threat reduction assistance to the former Soviet Union.
- United States assistance to the former Soviet Union has resulted in more than 6,000 strategic nuclear warheads being removed from deployment, the elimination of 1,000 ballistic missiles, and the destruction of 600 air-to-surface nuclear missiles, 126 bombers, and 27 ballistic missile submarines.
- G-8 leaders, as part of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, pledged in 2002 to raise \$20 billion over the next 10 years for related projects, initially in Russia. The United States commitment is for \$10 billion, or half the goal.
- G-8 Global Partnership priorities include fissile material disposition, nuclear submarine dismantlement, chemical weapon destruction, and employment of former weapons scientists.

Nuclear Testing

- The United States has not conducted a nuclear test since 1992, continues to observe its nuclear testing moratorium, has no plans to conduct a nuclear test, and encourages others not to test.
- While the United States does not support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and will not become a party to it, the United States continues to work with the Provisional Technical Secretariat on IMS-related activities.

Targeting and Alert Status

The United States no longer targets any country with nuclear weapons on a day-to-day basis. Mr. Chairman, let me repeat: the United States no longer targets any country with nuclear weapons on a day-to-day basis. Strategic bombers are no longer on alert. Dual-capable aircraft no longer operate on a high-alert basis, and their readiness requirements now are measured in weeks and months, rather than minutes. These measures would have been unheard of during the Cold War. Significant steps such as these contribute to Article VI goals and to global stability, and more generally to confidence-building.

Broadening Deterrence and Shifting Its Emphasis

Mr. Chairman, the points that I have just described in detail by themselves represent undeniable Article VI progress. Notwithstanding, beyond numerical reductions of weapons and delivery systems, which are critical to Article VI objectives, the United States has set in motion an entirely new way of looking at the role of nuclear weapons in our defense strategy.

I speak, Mr. Chairman, of the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, or NPR, of 2001. The United States has undertaken reviews of this sort in the past, but the 2001 NPR is unique, and fully consistent with Article VI. The 2001 NPR established a New Triad of strategic capabilities, one that places far less reliance on nuclear weapons to meet U.S. defense policy goals. Until the 2001 NPR, the U.S. triad included intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and long-range bombers armed with strategic nuclear weapons. The "New Triad" includes:

- Non-nuclear and nuclear forces;
- Active and passive defenses, including ballistic missile defenses; and
- The research and development and industrial infrastructure needed to develop, build and maintain offensive forces and defensive systems that will allow us to respond flexibly to unanticipated threats that we may face in the 21st century.

Let me emphasize, Mr. Chairman, that the New Triad concept resulting from the NPR, in principle and in practice, will reduce reliance on nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy. It reflects a totally new vision of the future, and is fully consistent with our indisputable resolve to implement Article VI.

A final thought about the NPR. It is unfortunate that, since the NPR's announcement, some have mischaracterized it. The NPR often is cited as quote, "evidence," unquote that the United States is failing to undertake its nuclear disarmament obligations. This, Mr. Chairman, is simply untrue. Regrettably, however, such criticism has the effect of drowning out the important message -- that of the United States reducing its reliance on nuclear weapons for its security, and of the tremendous strides that we are making to fully implement Article VI.

No New Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Chairman, let me state another fact. The NPT does not prohibit the nuclear weapon states from modernizing their nuclear forces. That said, it is important at this point to stress that the United States is not, repeat not, developing new nuclear weapons.

The charge that the 2001 NPR called for new nuclear weapons is incorrect. The United States is not developing, testing, or producing any nuclear warheads and has not done so in more than a decade. The NPR, however, did identify shortfalls in capabilities where new weapons -- conventional or nuclear -- could be required.

In this regard, there are two activities that have been debated extensively:

- A modest research effort on advanced nuclear weapon concepts, the money for which Congress recently re-directed to studies of current technologies to enhance confidence in warhead reliability without testing; and
- A study on whether -- without testing -- an existing weapon could be adapted to hold at risk hardened, deeply buried targets.

These programs are not what critics claim. The proposed research on advanced concepts has multiple purposes, including the furtherance of stockpile stewardship, which is the ongoing U.S. effort to ensure the safety and reliability of its nuclear weapons without testing. In similar fashion, the robust nuclear earth penetrator (RNEP) study is intended to look at one possible way to enhance deterrence using an existing warhead in an era of shrinking stockpiles. It bears emphasis that there have been no decisions to move beyond the study stage, which would require Presidential and congressional action.

Critics argue that leaders would see low-yield weapons as readily usable, and that the nuclear threshold would be lowered as a consequence of their development. Again, this simply is not the case. The United States has had low-yield weapons since the 1950s. There were thousands at the height of the Cold War. They were not used. A decision to use nuclear weapons, which must be made by the President, is not easier if yields are lower. The nuclear threshold has always been very high, and will remain so.

Our efforts are directed toward ensuring that our ever-smaller nuclear stockpile remains safe and reliable in the absence of nuclear testing, and that the credibility, safety, and reliability of the nuclear element of our New Triad are maintained. Like all governments, the United States balances its obligations under Article VI with our obligations to maintain our own security and the security of those who depend on us. The United States is meeting all of these obligations, and we will continue to do so.

The Wrong Road

There are those, Mr. Chairman, who say that certain United States policies somehow are to blame for others' decisions to pursue nuclear weapons. These, however, are merely the words of nuclear proliferators or their apologists. From the very beginning, the NPT has recognized that certain states possessed nuclear weapons and would work to eliminate them. But compliance with all provisions of the NPT is very important -- and should be a shared objective. It is both logically and legally untenable for those who wish that nuclear disarmament were progressing at a faster rate to pretend that compliance with nonproliferation obligations is linked to compliance with disarmament obligations, or that the nonproliferation obligations of the Treaty are any less binding than the disarmament obligations, or to argue that the nonproliferation obligations should not be strengthened or enforced. Such thinking is, simply put, dangerous in the extreme.

Mr. Chairman, how can some assert that nuclear weapons are dangerous and should be eliminated, yet also imply that others may reserve the right to develop nuclear weapons if the nuclear weapon states do not disarm with greater dispatch? Again, such thinking is dangerous in the extreme.

What Review Conferences Do

Mr. Chairman, NPT Review Conferences serve a vital function. They facilitate a thorough exchange of views on Treaty implementation, and reaffirm the Parties' belief that the Treaty as a whole contributes to international security, as well as to their own. Review Conferences also can serve to build support for pursuit of NPT goals in other venues, such as the IAEA.

By their nature, Review Conferences are political exercises meant to underscore or reaffirm existing Treaty obligations, that is to say, obligations freely accepted by all Parties deriving from the Treaty itself. They are also opportunities to discuss threats to the Treaty, such as how some Parties seek to "pocket" the privileges of membership while preparing to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Review Conferences, however, are not amendment conferences, and any declarations or decisions or other text emanating from them neither supercede, nor reinterpret, nor add onto the explicit legal obligations of all Parties under the Treaty. The legal undertakings of the NPT are solemn commitments, requiring the approval of national political authorities and sovereign constitutional ratification processes. As we review past Article VI progress, and consider how to shape discussions for the next five years, it will be important to keep these points in mind.

General and Complete Disarmament

Mr. Chairman, the United States believes that many States Parties have made little effort to meet their non-nuclear obligations under Article VI: that is, to pursue negotiations in good faith on general and complete disarmament. In fact, this component of Article VI often is overlooked entirely, even though the text and negotiating history of the NPT support the expectation that efforts toward complete nuclear disarmament would be linked with efforts toward general and complete disarmament. As Article VI states, the full undertaking envisions a "Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

Clearly, over time, the international community has moved away from pursuing this element of Article VI implementation in a literal sense. While this is not the time for a specific summary of United States achievements in the field of non-nuclear arms reductions, Mr. Chairman, we take this opportunity to state for the record that our efforts in this area, particularly in the field of chemical and biological weapons control, are extensive. In short, there is a clear relationship between the nuclear and non-nuclear aspects of Article VI, even though the language in the Treaty contains no suggestion whatsoever that nuclear disarmament must be achieved before general and complete disarmament can be achieved.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, the actions that our Government has taken, or is committed to take in the coming years, demonstrate that the United States is in full compliance with Article VI. As the Review Conference proceeds, the United States Delegation will provide further evidence of this, including several Article VI publications and a visual display just outside this chamber. We welcome full engagement and discussion on Article VI precisely because any objective review of the facts should lead to the conclusion that the United States is fulfilling its Article VI obligations. The U.S. is seeking to be as transparent as possible with regard to its Article VI activities, as all the nuclear-weapon States should be.

As the outstanding United States record of compliance with Article VI is better understood, Mr. Chairman, parties should come to understand that an excessive focus on nuclear disarmament denies due attention by the parties to the nonproliferation articles of the Treaty, and to the crisis of compliance to which this imbalance of attention has contributed so greatly. Indeed, all NPT parties must respond effectively to this crisis or our collective security will be diminished.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

