Remarks by the Honorable Rose E. Gottemoeller  
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Delegation of the United States of America  
First Committee - Disarmament and International Security  
United Nations General Assembly  
New York, New York  
October 10, 2012  

As Prepared

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the United States, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Desra Percaya, for your election to Chair of the First Committee during its 67th session. We look forward to working with you and pledge our support. The committee is in good hands under your fine leadership. Mr. Chairman, the United States pledges its full support to you in overseeing a productive 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly First Committee.

I am pleased to come before the UNGA First Committee, for the third time in as many years, to provide the views of my government on important issues before the First Committee. Though the road to a stable and secure world without nuclear weapons will be long and difficult, the United States has made great progress in pursuit of the vision set out by President Obama three years ago in Prague. We know that it is in everyone’s interest to extend forever the more than 65-year record of non-use of nuclear weapons.

One of the foundational cores in this pursuit is the global nuclear nonproliferation regime and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) that underpins it. The NPT must be upheld if we are to make progress toward nuclear disarmament. This requires that all states meet their obligations under the treaty, with particular focus on the comprehensive Action Plan adopted by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference.

Understanding our responsibility to be leaders in disarmament, the United States and the Russian Federation entered into the New START Treaty – the most comprehensive arms control agreement in almost 20 years.

The implementation of New START is going very well. Parties have exchanged more than 3,000 notifications on their respective strategic forces, and the on-site
inspections that enable each side to confirm the validity of that data are now well underway.

Our experience so far demonstrates that New START’s verification regime works and sets an important precedent for future negotiations.

When President Obama signed New START in Prague in 2010, he stressed his intention to pursue further reductions in strategic, non-strategic and non-deployed nuclear weapons. We and the Russian Federation are now engaged in a dialogue on strategic stability, laying the groundwork for future negotiations.

The United States is proud to be a part of a new effort – the “P5 Process.” This high-priority, regularized dialogue among the five NPT nuclear weapon states is integral to progress on the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

The United States hosted the Washington P5 Conference this past June – the third in a series of such conferences. These conferences are contributing to political dialogue and new forms of cooperation on nuclear weapons issues to an extent unseen in prior years. And this work, I will underscore, is among all P5 states.

Regarding other multilateral efforts, the United States is working consistently and actively in support of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We are pleased to report that the P5 and Mongolia reached agreement on parallel declarations regarding Mongolia’s nuclear-weapon-free status. We also look forward to signature of a P-5 Protocol to the zone treaty in Southeast Asia and to advance dialogue with parties to the zone treaty in Central Asia.

On the nonproliferation front, the United States applauds the 17 states that have brought the IAEA Additional Protocol (AP) into force since the 2010 NPT Review Conference, bringing the total to 118 states. This Protocol has become the international standard for safeguards, and we encourage all countries to adopt it.

We are also working with the IAEA and its Member States to strengthen safeguards in other ways, including by ensuring the IAEA has the political support and resources needed to fulfill its essential mission.

International cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the third NPT pillar, continues to be vigorous. I am pleased to report that the IAEA’s Peaceful Uses Initiative now has 13 contributing states and the Board of Governors has
approved measures to assure IAEA members of reliable access to fuel for peaceful nuclear power plants.

While the United States and other Parties make progress on each pillar of the NPT, we have grave concerns about the actions of a few countries. Iran, North Korea and Syria violated their NPT obligations, and have not taken the steps necessary to rectify these violations. These violations continue to threaten international security and undermine confidence in the nonproliferation regime. These cases, above all, stand in the way of our shared disarmament goals. The international community must therefore insist on a return to compliance, in keeping with the NPT Action Plan.

Beyond nuclear issues, the United States welcomes the success of the 7th BWC Review Conference, and the ambitious work plan it adopted. We are also pushing forward with our bio-transparency initiative that is aimed at building confidence in the BWC regime.

We are also commemorating the 15th year since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The United States remains fully committed to the CWC and as all States Parties to the OPCW work towards a world free from the scourge of chemical weapons, we recognize that there remain real challenges before us.

We, along with partners in the international community, call on the Syrian government to eliminate its chemical weapons arsenal, cease all threats of their use and join the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Chairman, the United States is also hard at work on the creation, completion and implementation of several other international arms control and nonproliferation treaties and agreements.

The July UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty made significant progress towards realizing a strong and effective Treaty to regulate international trade in conventional arms. The United States is committed to improving the current draft text and supports convening a short, focused, consensus-based Conference in 2013 to continue our work. We look forward to cooperating with our partners to achieve a treaty text that can be adopted by consensus.

Ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a top priority for the United States. Despite the tough budget
climate in Washington, the United States has provided over $40 million in extra-budgetary contributions to the CTBTO, in addition to our annual assessment, demonstrating our confidence in and commitment to this important Treaty.

As the United States moves forward with its ratification process, we encourage all Annex 2 States to ratify this Treaty.

The United States is continuing its fight for the verifiable end to the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. A Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) is a logical and absolutely essential next step in the path towards global nuclear disarmament.

The CD remains our preferred venue for negotiating an FMCT, since it includes every major nuclear-capable state and operates by consensus, ensuring everyone’s national security concerns are protected.

A year ago the United States initiated consultations among the P5 and others on unblocking FMCT negotiations in the CD, and to prepare our own countries for what we expect would be a challenging negotiation.

This “P5 Plus” has potential to move FMCT forward. That said, our patience on this issue is not infinite and we will push for what is in the best interest of global security. We will work hard to convince others that commencement of negotiations is not something to fear.

Mr. Chairman, the United States is and has always been committed to innovation, and arms control and nonproliferation are no exception.

To respond to the ever-changing security landscape, we are looking for creative ways to tackle long-standing verification and monitoring problems in an increasingly inter-dependent and interconnected world. This kind of thinking will be vital, as we face the challenges of the 21st century.

Mr. Chairman, the United States will continue to work to make its way on the road to a world without nuclear weapons. This is hard work. There are no shortcuts and no practical alternatives to a persistent step-by-step process. This is the only viable path toward disarmament. We call on all nations to take seriously their commitments to international arms control and nonproliferation regimes and work together to move forward down the road, as well.
Thank you very much for your attention and I look forward to our further deliberations. Thank you, sir.