Mr. Chairman,

I am speaking on behalf of France, the United Kingdom and the United States with regard to L.22, “Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems.”

We continue to disagree with the basic premises of this resolution, which suggest that the current level of readiness of nuclear weapons increases the risk of the unintentional or accidental use and that lowered alert levels will automatically and in all cases lead to heightened international security. While alert levels can and have been lowered in response to an improved international security climate, the relationship between alert levels and security is complex and not reducible to simple formulaic responses.

We would like to restate that the operational readiness of our respective nuclear weapons systems is maintained at a level consonant with our national security requirements and our obligations to our allies, within the larger context of the current global strategic situation. In reflection thereof, we have decreased the operational readiness and alert levels of our respective forces since the early 1990s. Additionally, our respective nuclear weapons systems are no longer targeted against any state.

Collectively, those steps have reduced the value of further “de-alerting” as a priority for nuclear disarmament.
We would also like to reiterate that our nuclear weapons systems are subject to the most rigorous command, control and communication systems, to ensure against the possibility of accidental or unintentional use, and to guarantee that such weapons could only be used at the sole direction of the proper national command authority and to maximise that authority’s decision time.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.