Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a fundamental goal of the United States to create a climate in which all States can enjoy the benefits of cyberspace; all have incentives to cooperate and avoid conflict; and all have good reason not to disrupt or attack one another – a concept we call international cyber stability. We have sought to achieve this goal by nurturing a broad consensus on what constitutes responsible State behavior in cyberspace.

The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security has served as a productive and groundbreaking expert-level venue to advance international stability in cyberspace. The consensus recommendations of the three UN GGE reports (2010, 2013, and 2015) have included affirmation of the applicability of existing international law to States’ activities in cyberspace, support for certain voluntary norms of responsible State behavior in peacetime, and the implementation of practical CBMs. In addition, these three landmark and successful GGE reports have demonstrated the value of consensus-driven, expert-level negotiation on this topic within the UN. The failure to find consensus during the most recent round of GGE discussions demonstrates that there are challenging issues that we still need to confront. However, this inability to reach consensus does not make the existing GGE recommendations of the previous reports any less valid or important. We look forward to future discussions where we can focus on the important issues, particularly on those issues where we were unable to find consensus during the most recent GGE.

Mr. Chairman,

At this year’s First Committee session, the United States is again sponsoring our resolution on “Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments.” I will take a moment to introduce L.7 under agenda item 99(aa), “General and Complete Disarmament.”

Mr. Chairman, there is a broad consensus that compliance with international treaties, agreements, and other obligations and commitments undertaken by UN Member States to prevent the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, and to regulate and/or reduce armaments, is a central element of the international security architecture. Without the confidence that countries are honoring their commitments, the deals we make with one another in this field will not be worth the paper on which they are printed. Moreover, the authority and
benefits of effective agreements and commitments will be undermined, and the world will become a far more dangerous place, if we fail to hold states accountable for their noncompliance, in accordance with international law.

Which brings me to North Korea’s unlawful and dangerous behavior. North Korea’s dangerous actions violate multiple UN Security Council resolutions, and collectively they present a security threat not just to Northeast Asia, but to the entire world. Over the last 25 years, North Korea has violated every agreement it made regarding its nuclear weapons program. Instead, North Korea has used its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development programs to threaten Member States, and leveraged international negotiations and agreements to extort benefits such as oil, food, and money from the international community, continuing its destructive drive toward a nuclear arsenal.

Given North Korea’s failure to comply with its disarmament and nonproliferation obligations and its failure to live up to its international commitments, this body must make clear that compliance is essential to international peace and security, through supporting this resolution. L.7 acknowledges the widespread recognition that noncompliance undermines international peace and stability and affirms our determination to use diplomacy to return violators to compliance.

Mr. Chairman, this year’s version of the resolution contains only minor technical updates to the text we sponsored in 2014. L.7 is open for co-sponsorship, and we would welcome even more co-sponsors than the 73 that this resolution currently enjoys.

We hope that all nations represented here will join in supporting L.7, as the principle of compliance with treaties, agreements, obligations, and commitments in this field, freely undertaken, is something which should be universally accepted.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.