2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Vienna, 26 April 2018

Statement to be delivered on behalf of the QUAD

Mr Chair,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of Norway, the United States, the United Kingdom and my own country, Sweden – ‘the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership’.

We have entered into a multi-year arms control simulation initiative. The “Quad” initiative builds on experience from the UK-Norway Initiative (UKNI) and previous UK-US verification and arms control exercises.

The Quad can make a tangible contribution to the current NPT cycle and the goals of Article VI. It aims to provide the international community with:

a) Capacity-building in the form of hands on practical experience of nuclear weapon-related verification

b) A realistic testbed for exercising and evaluating monitoring technologies that all states could use in support of their work on verification issues,
c) Model verification strategies that could contribute to future discussions on how treaty monitoring activities could be implemented in the real world

This step toward multilateralism will be valuable for understanding the impact of including multiple Nuclear Weapons States and Non-Nuclear Weapons States on future verification activities and will demonstrate that such collaboration is beneficial without promoting proliferation.

Last year in October, we held a live-play exercise at the former nuclear weapons storage base, RAF Honington. The exercise, called LETTERPRESS, was the culmination of two years of extensive work in roundtable discussions and working group meetings that supported the development and evaluation of the simulation’s verification activities and goals.

In this simulation exercise, we focused on verification research efforts that had not been addressed in previous collaborations. It also included two NNWS and two NWS as opposed to earlier bilateral arrangements. The simulation focused on nuclear warhead activities that occur between removal of warheads from in-field deployment and delivery of warheads for dismantlement. Verification activities related to the enduring, active warheads and a comparison between the two streams were also simulated.
The simulation exercise was designed to achieve three main objectives:

1. Provide players with experience of verification activities associated with managed access to nuclear weapon facilities, deployment and use of verification equipment, and general host-inspector interactions.

2. Enable QUAD partners to identify opportunities where future verification technologies may be applied, or where changes to host procedures may be required to support future verification.

3. Provide QUAD partners with experience of developing associated verification procedures.

In the scenario, we tested “chain of custody” concepts through storage and transportation, nuclear weapon managed access procedures, and verification equipment and techniques to confirm the completeness of the site declaration.

We are currently working on an evaluation report from the exercise drawing on the feedback collected from players and planners.

Before ending my statement, I would like to invite you, on behalf of the Quad States to a side-event entitled “Concepts and Methods for Nuclear Disarmament Verification: The QUAD/LETTERPRESS multilateral arms reduction exercise between NWS and NNWS”. The side event will take place today (26 April) during lunch time at 13.15 in room XI.
During the side event we will give a presentation of the joint exercise and our preliminary findings. Other than a great presentation there will of course be delicious sandwiches served. I hope to see you there!

Thank you Mr Chair.