Closing Statement by the United States

Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the
2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Permanent Representative of the United States
to the Conference on Disarmament

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Mr. Chairman,

First, allow me to thank you for your impressive leadership of this Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting, including your thorough and inclusive consultations in advance of the meeting. You, Amb. Henk Cor van der Kwast, and your respective teams have set a high standard for leadership in this NPT review cycle. The United States looks forward to working with your successor, Ambassador Shahrl Ikram of Malaysia, and hopes the full team, including the RevCon President, will soon be in place.

This review cycle marks the golden anniversary of the Treaty. This milestone should lead all of us to recall the how much the Treaty has contributed to our security, and to rededicate ourselves to maintaining and strengthening the Treaty in all its aspects.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons remains the central and fundamental benefit of the NPT to all States Party. The United States was pleased to note the strong support for the Additional Protocol (AP) during the PrepCom. We will continue to work towards universalizing the AP as the de facto safeguards standard under the NPT.

A strong and effective nuclear nonproliferation regime also builds confidence that nuclear programs will not contribute to nuclear proliferation. This confidence, alongside high standards for nuclear safety and security, enables the widespread and diverse benefits that can flow from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science, and technology. The United States looks forward to working together with all to accentuate and expand those benefits.

Mr. Chairman,

North Korea’s unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs remain a paramount global security issue. North Korea’s recent words and commitments are encouraging but we await concrete actions toward permanent, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. The continued success of the NPT depends on constant vigilance to respond to such challenges. Failing to address such challenges will put at risk the diverse security and development benefits we all derive from the Treaty.
North Korea’s actions outside of the nonproliferation regime are but one part of the overall trend of deterioration in the security environment that has made near-term prospects for progress on nuclear disarmament bleak. Returning to more favorable conditions will require states to acknowledge the inseparable link between disarmament and the prevailing security environment, and the need for all States Party to actively work together on effective measures to help create the conditions that would make further nuclear disarmament possible. Throughout this PrepCom, the United States has been promoting an approach to do just that, which we term “Creating the Conditions for Nuclear Disarmament.” We encourage everyone here to review the working paper the United States submitted to the PrepCom, which lays out the approach in detail.

One key aspect of this approach is promoting transparency. The United States has demonstrated its commitment to transparency throughout this meeting, including by hosting a side event here on the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review that included participation by senior leaders from the Defense Department. We believe it is important to engage with others on the basis for U.S. nuclear policy. The UK and France have been similarly open with regard to their nuclear policies. We encourage Russia and China to also take actions to demonstrate their commitment to transparency.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States remains committed to the long-term goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems. Our working paper offers constructive ideas grounded in political and security realities in the region. The paper does not seek to impose preconditions for a zone or to dictate a path ahead. Instead, it is an invitation to dialogue with and – more importantly – among the regional states regarding what can be done to build trust and address underlying conditions in the region that have impeded progress. Not least among these is the deplorable use of chemical weapons by one regional state against its own people. Few issues are more directly relevant to the goal of a WMD-free zone. Ultimately, the decision regarding how to proceed on a zone is up to the regional states, and cannot be imposed by outside parties. The United States stands ready to support any approach that has consensus support among all the regional states and is based in direct and inclusive dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

We appreciate your substantive summary of our deliberations here. We acknowledge that it is issued under your own authority, and as such, does not and is not meant to command a consensus. While we can agree with many of the views expressed in your summary, there is also much with which we take issue. Nevertheless, your document clearly shows that NPT Parties are unified in their support for the Treaty as the cornerstone of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Where we continue to differ is how best to achieve the Treaty’s goals.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, let me thank you once again for your outstanding leadership during this second meeting of the 2020 NPT review cycle. The NPT has made and will continue to make the world
a far safer place by limiting the number of States that possess nuclear weapons, and serving as the foundation for nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we look forward to 2020, the United States remains committed to working with all NPT Parties to keep the Treaty strong, vibrant, and effective.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.