Mr. Chairman,

My delegation will vote “no” on draft resolution L.3, “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.” The United States believes that, again this year, this resolution fails to meet the fundamental tests of fairness and balance. It confines itself to expressions of concern about the activities of a single country, omitting any reference to other nuclear proliferation concerns in the region. The most glaring omission continues to be the lack of any reference to the violations of some NPT States Party in the region of their IAEA Safeguards and NPT obligations and their failure to cooperate fully and transparently with the IAEA.

Notwithstanding our “no” vote, I would like to reiterate the longstanding position of the United States in support of universal adherence to the NPT. I would also like to highlight our readiness to work with others to build the confidence necessary to ensure the success of a regional conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, as called for by this year’s NPT Review Conference. This will require that conditions be in place so that the conference can be conducted in a constructive and unbiased way.

Unfortunately, raising the 2012 conference in the context of this unbalanced resolution hurts prospects for such an outcome. We find this regrettable. Countries must feel confident that they can attend the 2012 conference and not be isolated or subject to political pressure or attack. Holding this conference will also require agreement to discuss a broad agenda, to include regional security issues, verification and compliance, and all categories of weapons of mass destruction. The United States has already begun to work with others to advance such a positive agenda. But using the First Committee to carry forward regional agendas or score political points is not the way to begin. I hope we can do better.