Mr. Chairman, the United States is actively undertaking progressive, mutually reinforcing steps to move us closer to our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. This goal is at the heart of President Obama’s nuclear agenda presented in Prague three years ago. Only a balanced approach to maintain international security will move us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. This requires strengthening the global nuclear nonproliferation regime, while working toward nuclear disarmament.

A year ago, the United States initiated consultations among the P5 and other countries to unblock Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and to prepare our own countries for what we expect to be technically challenging negotiations. These countries have met several times over the past year to discuss the way ahead. Bringing these countries to the table is our best means to move an FMCT forward and unblock negotiations in the CD.

There are calls for alternate, whole-scale approaches to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. While we share this goal, we do not share this approach at a fundamental level: Disarmament, as we all know, is hard work. There are no shortcuts and no practical alternatives to the step-by-step approach. Trying to accomplish everything at once will distract from more realistic efforts. It is for that reason that we do not support proposals to set up new UN mechanisms to address nuclear disarmament. Such mechanisms would fare no better than existing bodies.

The five NPT nuclear-weapon states are engaging intensively on a wide range of topics related to all three pillars of the NPT Action Plan: nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses. Washington hosted the latest in a series of P5 Conferences this past June to review and plan P5 progress in fulfilling the NPT Action Plan. This followed the 2009 Conference in London and the 2011 Conference in Paris. As my good colleague Ambassador Wu reported last week, we are working on a common glossary of nuclear terms; focusing on transparency, reporting, confidence building, and verification; working toward entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and commencement of FMCT negotiations; and engaging on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and the NPT withdrawal issue. Let me commend to your attention copies of the P5 statement from that conference, which are at the back of the room.

We also recognize our responsibilities, along with the Russian Federation, as the countries holding the largest nuclear arsenals. The United States and the Russian Federation are successfully implementing the New START treaty, which is the most
comprehensive nuclear disarmament agreement in 20 years. When Treaty reductions are completed, we will have cut American and Russian deployed nuclear weapons to their lowest levels since the 1950s. On-site inspections, data exchanges, notifications, and consultations are providing a very detailed picture of U.S. and Russian strategic forces, enabling each side to confirm the accuracy of each other’s nuclear disarmament activities. Its verification regime is, in some ways, the most intrusive nuclear disarmament verification regime yet, and it is setting an important precedent for future negotiations.

The United States is committed to step-by-step reductions, including the pursuit of further reductions with Russia in all categories of nuclear weapons – strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed. We have begun a bilateral dialogue on strategic stability that can lay the groundwork for future negotiations.

Now, as we make deep reductions and pursue additional ones, I would like to underscore that U.S. policy prohibits the development of new nuclear warheads. The United States is neither developing new nuclear weapons, nor are we pursuing any new nuclear missions. The expenditures we are making in infrastructure and necessary safety improvements should not be conflated or confused with nuclear weapons development.

Another area where we have seen significant progress this past year is in the advancement of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. The United States has worked actively to extend legally binding negative security assurances under these treaties. We have submitted to the U.S. Senate for advice and consent to ratification the relevant protocols to the Treaties of Pelindaba and Rarotonga. We are working for P5 signature of the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok as soon as possible. After some preliminary discussions we expect that the pace of consultations with the parties to the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty will begin to accelerate. We are also very pleased to report that the P5 and Mongolia recently made parallel declarations regarding Mongolia’s nuclear-weapon-free status. This is the capstone of many years of effort by Mongolia, the P5, and the United Nations, and will be included in a First Committee resolution that we sincerely hope will be adopted by consensus.

More broadly, the United States has in place a declaratory policy that it will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that are Party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

In that spirit, we continue our work to implement the 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document Action Plan and strengthen all three pillars of the NPT. In addition to our disarmament activities, we are working with the IAEA and Member States to resolve all cases of noncompliance with nonproliferation obligations and to strengthen safeguards, including by ensuring the IAEA has the support necessary to fulfill its essential verification mission, and we are continuing our efforts to make the Additional Protocol universal. We continue, as many states here have noted, to have grave concerns about non-compliance by Iran, the DPRK, and Syria with their nonproliferation and UN Security Council obligations. As noted by my Acting Under
Secretary Gottemoeller in our opening statement, these cases undermine confidence in the nonproliferation regime and they stand in the way of our shared disarmament goals. They also threaten international security. The international community must insist on a return to compliance, in keeping with the NPT Action Plan.

We are enhancing support for the NPT’s vital third pillar, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, not only to strengthen the regime, but to contribute to economic development. In addition to our long-standing support to the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Fund, we pledged $50 million to the IAEA’s Peaceful Uses Initiative between 2010 and 2015, and we have already provided approximately $21 million. Funded projects are benefitting over 120 countries under that new program. We welcome the partnership of the twelve other countries that have joined by contributing to this important IAEA initiative.

We believe that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will play a central role in leading the world towards a diminished reliance on nuclear weapons, reduced nuclear competition, and eventual nuclear disarmament. The CTBT will constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons as well as the development of advanced types of nuclear weapons. We are fully committed to pursuing ratification of the Treaty and its eventual entry into force.

The United States is actively working to reduce its holdings of fissile material stocks that could be used in nuclear weapons. Under the U.S.-Russian Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA), each side will verifiably dispose of no less than 34 metric tons of weapon-grade plutonium – enough in total for 17,000 nuclear weapons. The PMDA entered into force in 2011, and our two countries are working toward an agreement on verification provisions with the IAEA. Once disposed of, this plutonium will be in a form that cannot be used for nuclear weapons. It is irreversible.

A verifiable treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons is necessary if we are to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons. An FMCT is an absolutely essential step for global nuclear disarmament and the next logical step in halting the increase of nuclear arsenals.

As a practical matter, the CD—which includes every major nuclear capable state, operates by consensus, and allows members to ensure their national security concerns are met.

It remains the optimal place to negotiate a multilateral FMCT. However, when it comes to what is in the best interest of international security, the venue for FMCT negotiations is less important than achieving a credible treaty, and for a treaty to be credible, the states most directly affected by FMCT should be involved in its negotiation.

Mr. Chairman, I have just detailed for you how the path that the U.S. is on has produced tangible results. We think it’s got a proven track record, the NPT Action Plan is being implemented, and this path will lead us to our final destination of a world without nuclear weapons. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.