I would like to thank the Chair for his leadership, the generally excellent synthesis paper, and for the opportunity to speak.

The Los Alamos Study Group is a partner organization in the outstanding ICAN network. I speak today on behalf of the Study Group.

First, reflecting on the charge given to the OEWG by the General Assembly, we see that it relates specifically to multilateral nuclear disarmament of existing nuclear weapons. Although questions of proliferation are very important, the OEWG mandate does not include them, strictly speaking. Our work here in the OEWG is disarmament.

So, with respect to delegations that have suggested that attention be placed on a matters such as a fissile materials ban, or on entry-into-force of the CTBT, it must be said that these are not disarmament measures at all. They are nonproliferation measures. The CTBT for example has not had any discernible disarmament effect on nuclear armed states, or on “existing” nuclear weapons, though it has been observed by some of those states for 20 years.

[Omitted for the sake of time: In my country and in others the CTBT has stimulated tremendous investment in surrogate nuclear testing capabilities, the goal of which is to design new nuclear explosives for new weapons. Very great precision has already been achieved in the U.S. and no doubt elsewhere also, making each one of today's subcritical tests as productive as dozens of them were in the 1990s.

Last year Congress charged the nuclear weapons laboratories and plants to prototype new nuclear weapons, beyond those now planned for production, to exercise these design capabilities.]

To these two measures could be added many other nonproliferation measures typically listed as “building blocks” or “confidence-building measures.” Even though for some states it is convenient and customary to conflate nonproliferation, the prevention of nuclear terrorism, and disarmament, the first two of these problems are peripheral to this group’s purpose. In our opinion this should be noted in the Chair’s report.

Second, the OEWG’s mandate was to address “concrete effective legal measures” to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations.
There is simply no escaping the fact that the nuclear armed states do not, at present, want to disarm. They are not even represented here, except through NGOs such as ours. They do not believe their arsenals are illegitimate, or immoral. There is no evidence whatsoever that they seek a “nuclear weapons free world,” and every indication to the contrary. They believe and some of them frequently state in domestic settings that their threat of mutual annihilation has “kept the peace.” Beyond this, some states have, and seek to further develop, through concrete, funded plans, nuclear warfighting doctrines and weapons, as a means of winning wars begun with conventional weapons. The United States is one of these countries. Their concrete plans, set forth in legally binding contracts in many cases, are to keep these instruments of mass annihilation, in the case of the U.S. for many decades.

Their modernization plans and commitments currently carry a collective financial commitment that far exceeds a trillion dollars.

Therefore, given these facts, all the suggested disarmament measures we hear from states that require good-faith participation of nuclear-armed states will fail, for the same reasons that identical efforts have been failing for decades.

Can sure-to-fail measures be called “effective?” Do they meet the standard given to this group? In what way are the impossible, merely hypothetical measures we so often hear even be relevant?

All available data suggest that, until nuclear weapons can be sufficiently stigmatized and norms against them strengthened, only measures carried by non-nuclear nuclear armed states can be “effective.” One criterion for an effective, practical measure, is that the participation of nuclear weapon states is not required to achieve it.

Thank you.