Statement by the United States in Cluster 3: Specific Issue

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

Statement by Mark W. Goodman
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to share our views on the issue of NPT Withdrawal.

As we review the implementation of the Treaty, it is important to consider the current challenges and how we can adapt and respond to preserve the benefits of the Treaty for all. As many of us have stressed throughout this PrepCom, today, our world faces no greater security challenge than that posed by North Korea. The DPRK has resumed its reprocessing activities, admitted enriching uranium for nuclear weapons, and carried out five nuclear tests and many ballistic missile launches, in open defiance of multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

Long before these recent actions, the DPRK announced its withdrawal from the Treaty. Yet since that time, three Review Conferences have been unable to reach consensus on ways to discourage similar action in the future. To be clear, no one is proposing to amend the Treaty or to limit the legitimate right of withdrawal, a right that is woven into the fabric of the NPT. However, it is a basic principle of international law that a withdrawing State remains responsible for any unresolved noncompliance prior to its withdrawal. Vigorously enforcing this principle, and holding a withdrawing state fully accountable for such violations does not infringe that state’s rights but rather protects the interests of all other NPT Parties.

We must also consider measures to ensure that a withdrawing state cannot escape its obligations to other Parties not to misuse the fruits of peaceful nuclear cooperation. Many of us rely on binding bilateral assurances of peaceful use and safeguards to help ensure that items we supply are not misused or diverted. These bilateral assurances reinforce the corresponding undertakings in the Treaty and protect the collective interests of all Parties. To preserve those shared interests, we need to ensure that these assurances are enduring and vigorously enforced.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.