

**Statement by Ambassador Marguerita Ragsdale
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Cluster 1 (Disarmament)

**Third Session of the Preparatory Committee
2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

A great deal of attention has been focused on the initial months of the new U.S. Administration, and few would disagree that it has put forward an extremely ambitious and comprehensive strategy for dealing with the many serious problems that the world faces today. Among them are the dangers posed by nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, dangers that animate President Obama's call for a new direction and new momentum in pursuit of nuclear disarmament. As President Barack Obama said in Prague on April 5th, "I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

President Obama has made clear that this goal will not be achieved quickly or in a vacuum. It will take patience and persistence. And it will require the cooperation of all states represented here today. The President also made clear the moral responsibility of the United States to act boldly to deal with the problem of nuclear weapons in the 21st Century, and it is in that spirit that the United States affirms its commitment to the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons. We are ready to join with the other NPT nuclear-weapon states in accelerating progress toward that goal, and with all NPT Parties in preventing nuclear weapons proliferation. We recognize the special responsibility of the United States and other nuclear- weapon states to pursue nuclear disarmament. But non-nuclear-weapon states bear no less responsibility to work actively and continuously to help create conditions that will make possible the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman, the United States already has begun to move forward with its commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. In their joint statement in London on April 1st, President Obama and Russian President Medvedev agreed to work together to fulfill our obligations under Article VI of the NPT, and to demonstrate leadership by reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the world. They committed our two countries to take steps to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, including through recognizing that this long-term goal will require a new emphasis on arms control and conflict resolution measures, fully implemented by all concerned nations.

The Presidents agreed to pursue new and verifiable reductions in our strategic offensive arsenals in a step-by-step process, beginning by replacing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with a new, legally-binding treaty. This new treaty will seek to reduce strategic offensive arms below the levels of the 2002 Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions, which is in effect through 2012. As Assistant Secretary of State Gottemoeller informed us a few days ago, American and Russian negotiators held an initial meeting in Rome on April 24, and we plan to reconvene in Moscow after this PrepCom concludes.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has embarked on a comprehensive review of its nuclear deterrence policy and strategy for the near term, in a process known as the Revised Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The United States Congress required this review to set the nuclear posture of the United States for the next five to ten years, and this is the third such review we have undertaken. The Review will provide interim guidance to the START negotiations with Russia and must be completed by December 2009. The 2009 NPR will move the United States

towards the Administration's stated goals of reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the U.S. national security strategy while maintaining a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear capability to deter adversaries and assure allies.

In Prague President Obama also committed the United States to pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). From the first days of the NPT, a global test-ban treaty has been seen as one of the most important actions to implement the nuclear disarmament goals of Article VI. It is time for the testing of nuclear weapons finally to be legally banned. In the months ahead, the United States will undertake a careful review of the technical, military and diplomatic issues surrounding the CTBT and work closely with our Congress to gain its consent to U.S. ratification. The United States also will work to ensure that the requirements for the CTBT's entry into force are met at the earliest possible time. We urge those countries that remain outside the CTBT to join us in working to bring the CTBT into force. Our Delegation also takes this opportunity to reaffirm the unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing that our Government has maintained for decades, and to call on all other governments, especially the other nuclear-weapon states, publicly to declare or reaffirm their intention not to test, pending the entry into force of the CTBT.

Mr. Chairman, President Obama also said in Prague that, "to cut off the building blocks for a nuclear bomb," the United States will seek a new treaty to verifiably end the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons. Like CTBT, a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) long has been considered integral to progress towards nuclear disarmament. It is time we set aside the impediments that have blocked the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for over a decade. The United States encourages all CD members to join us in this commitment and get on with the work of negotiating and bringing into force an FMCT when the CD reconvenes on May 18th. Pending its completion, our Delegation reaffirms the unilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material that our Government has maintained for decades, and calls on all other governments that have yet to do so to declare or reaffirm publicly their intention not to produce further fissile material.

We all are aware that the global nonproliferation regime is under great stress because of the new challenges that it faces in the 21st Century. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that, with the end of the nuclear arms race and our substantial progress on strategic reductions, the era marked by the threat of a massive nuclear exchange has ended. Our achievements should give us hope that, as President Obama pointed out in Prague, the world can change.

The United States has enunciated many times the specific steps that it has taken to reduce its nuclear forces in furtherance of our Article VI objectives, Mr. Chairman, but a review of this record is useful because it reminds us of what can be accomplished.

The START Treaty, which the U.S. and Russia have committed to replace, reduced U.S. and Russian deployed strategic warheads from well over 10,000 to 6,000 each. The U.S. is fully on target to meet the Moscow Treaty limits of between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally-deployed strategic nuclear warheads by 2012, having reduced to 2,246 such warheads as of December 31,

2008. In the area of non-strategic, or tactical, nuclear weapons, the United States, in consultation with its NATO allies, retired all U.S. nuclear artillery shells, nuclear warheads for short-range ballistic missiles, and naval nuclear anti-submarine warfare weapons. All of these weapons were dismantled by 2003. These actions reduced U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons in NATO by nearly 90 per cent.

The United States also has retired over 1,000 strategic ballistic missiles, 350 heavy bombers, and 28 ballistic missile submarines. Four modern Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines, carrying a total of 96 Trident missiles, have been removed from strategic service.

In 2004, in addition to the Moscow Treaty reductions in operationally- deployed strategic nuclear warheads, the United States decided to reduce the number of warheads in the overall U.S. nuclear stockpile, including both deployed and non-deployed warheads. By 2012 or sooner, the U.S. nuclear stockpile will be reduced by nearly one-half from its 2001 level and three-quarters from its 1990 level, resulting in the smallest stockpile since the 1950s.

The United States has also stepped up the pace of warhead elimination. We are already below the levels in our active stockpile that we had planned to reach in 2012, and we are retiring an additional 15 per cent of the stockpile below this planned level.

The United States is also making significant progress to eliminate fissile material. The United States has not enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons since 1964, or produced plutonium for nuclear weapons since 1988. We have no plans to produce these materials for use in nuclear weapons in the future. Since 1994, we have removed more than 374 metric tons of highly enriched uranium (HEU) from defense stocks, committing not to return these materials to weapons. Taken together, these removals account for enough nuclear material for an estimated 12,000 nuclear weapons.

Where possible, we aim to convert defense HEU to low enriched uranium for commercial use. Of the 370 metric tons of excess U.S. HEU, some 17.4 metric tons is now being down-blended and set aside for a nuclear fuel reserve to support international efforts to provide states with a viable alternative to pursuing enrichment and reprocessing programs. Perhaps the most successful example of cooperation to reduce nuclear threats is the agreement between the United States and Russia to down-blend more than 500 metric tons of highly-enriched uranium from Russia's dismantled nuclear weapons for use in U.S. nuclear power plants. Approximately 352 metric tons have been down-blended to date. The United States also has removed 61 metric tons of plutonium from potential use in nuclear weapons, of which 34 metric tons will be converted to fuel for civil nuclear power plants. Russia has committed to make a similar quantity of weapons plutonium available for disposition in civilian reactors.

Mr. Chairman, this record of achievement underscores the United States' firm and unequivocal commitment to the disarmament goals of the Preamble and of Article VI of the NPT. We look forward to continuing and building upon this record of achievement and contributing to international discussions on this topic. Through dialogue, understanding, and action, I am

confident we will succeed in creating a foundation for meeting our shared goal of a future world that is free of nuclear weapons and that can remain so.

In parallel with our ambitious nuclear disarmament agenda, we must all work together to strengthen all aspects of the NPT regime, including nonproliferation efforts. President Obama said in Prague that “the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of nuclear attack has gone up. More nations have acquired these weapons. Testing has continued. Black market trade in nuclear secrets and nuclear materials abound. The technology to build a [nuclear] bomb has spread. Terrorists are determined to buy, build, or steal one.” President Obama’s words remind us that the achievement of nuclear disarmament requires more than action by the nuclear-weapon states. It instead requires a shared commitment and responsibility to strengthen the NPT regime in all its aspects. The United States is determined to meet this challenge head on, and to do everything that we can to lead us toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

Looking ahead, if we are to succeed in accelerating progress toward our shared NPT goals, governments must recognize that we are all in this together. We must stop focusing on our differences and acting as separate interest groups--as states with advanced civil nuclear energy programs, or those just embarking on such programs; as members of security alliances or members of the non-aligned movement; as nuclear-weapon states or non-nuclear-weapon states. We must recognize the common threats that we face and work in unison to overcome them--casting aside slogans, thinking creatively, and seeking solutions that serve us all.

We must all reaffirm our commitment to the NPT vision, originally set out over four decades ago, of a world in which the spread of nuclear weapons has stopped, all NPT parties can harness the atom for peaceful purposes, and the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons is a beacon guiding us forward toward a safer, more secure world.

The United States reaffirms that commitment and looks forward to reinvigorated cooperation to achieve it in this PrepCom and the 2010 Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

