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PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by Stephen G. Rademaker, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, on the Test of Effective Multilateralism: Meeting the Dangers of the World with Resolve, in the First Committee, October 8, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States Delegation requests that the official record of today's proceedings reflect the written remarks that accompany our intervention at this time.

Let me begin, Mr. Chairman, by congratulating you, on behalf of the United States, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are, of course, delighted to see a representative of Mexico, our neighbor and partner in so many endeavors, in the chair. Your extensive experience with United Nations affairs will, we are certain, give you an unmatched understanding of the complex issues that this Committee will consider during this session. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau, who may count on the cooperation of our Delegation during this session.

Our Delegation takes this opportunity, as well, to thank the members of last year's Bureau for their dedication and hard work. We pay particular tribute to last year's Chairman, the distinguished Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland, Ambassador Jarmo Sareva. His performance in the Chair set a standard against which all future chairmen of this Committee will be judged.

Mr. Chairman, when I addressed this body last year, I said that the international community stood at a crossroads that would determine whether multilateral arms control institutions could break away from Cold War-era thinking and address new and emerging threats. I also expressed the strong hope of my Government that, collectively, we would opt for effectiveness and relevance.

Not long afterwards, President Bush expressed similar sentiments in an address delivered at Whitehall Palace in London. He observed that, "international organizations must be equal to the challenges facing our world, from lifting up failing states to opposing proliferation." He further stated that, "the success of

multilateralism is not measured by adherence to forms alone, the tidiness of the process, but by the results we achieve to keep our nations secure."

Two days later, on November 20, 2003, President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair issued a Joint Statement on Multilateralism. The Joint Statement emphasized that, "Effective multilateralism, and neither unilateralism nor international paralysis, will guide our approach."

Mr. Chairman, from the perspective of the United States, progress over the past year toward our goal of effective multilateralism in the area of arms control and disarmament has been mixed.

On the positive side, the United States was very pleased with the enthusiastic reaction to the resolution that we introduced last year on the revitalization of the First Committee. The interest shown in it by so many delegations and its adoption by consensus demonstrated that many UN Member States agree that this Committee needs to change its ways of doing business.

The United States also welcomes the valuable recommendations submitted by governments to the Secretary-General on practical ways to improve the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee. Our Delegation has tabled a draft resolution that will incorporate many of those suggestions. We already are consulting with other delegations and with both regional and political groups, closely and in an open manner, to ensure that our draft resolution incorporates all good ideas, no matter where they originate. This is a joint effort, and we shall continue to rely on the active participation and support of all delegations in developing a consensus text.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has called for the revitalization of the First Committee not just because Americans like efficiency --though we do --but because only a more effective Committee can give today's priority security issues the full consideration that they deserve. The international community has confronted some of these issues for decades; others have emerged only recently. This year at the Conference on Disarmament, my Government has endorsed efforts to address two separate threats to international peace. We believe firmly that this Committee also can contribute importantly to the maintenance *of* international peace and security.

Candor requires us to admit, Mr. Chairman, that we are dismayed by the current state *of* the multilateral arms control machinery. Surely, the United States is not alone in this feeling. Even though the CD tackled a broader range of issues this year, it remained deadlocked over its program of work and failed, for the eighth consecutive year, to make progress on its essential function -- the negotiation *of* multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements.

In an effort to break the logjam, the United States this year called for the initiation of two negotiations at the CD: the rapid conclusion of a Fissile Material Cutoff

Treaty, using a new approach, and a ban on the sale or export of persistent landmines.

Mr. Chairman, ending the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would enhance global strictures against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The negotiation of a legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices is a goal that the international community long has endorsed as an important step to reduce nuclear dangers. At the same time, the United States has concluded that effective international verification of an FMCT is not realistically achievable. Our Delegation calls on the CD to begin such negotiations as soon as possible after it reconvenes in January.

One important advantage of negotiating an FMCT without verification provisions is that it will be possible to conclude such a negotiation far faster than would be the case with an FMCT that sought to achieve effective verifiability. I note in this connection that the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference expressed the hope that it would be possible to complete negotiations on an effectively verifiable FMCT within five years of their commencement. This, of course, would only bring us to the point where the treaty would be signed and submitted to governments for ratification. Entry into force would only come years later.

We believe that this is too long to wait; many *of* the benefits that we all hope to achieve with an FMCT will be lost if we proceed down a path that will delay entry into force for roughly a decade. If we are serious about ending the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, we should agree to a normative, legal ban as soon as possible, while such a ban could still have important, practical meaning in curbing the growth of nuclear weapon stockpiles. The United States believes that we have identified an approach that can shorten this period considerably.

Our CD proposal on landmines, Mr. Chairman, is intended to help end the humanitarian crisis created by persistent landmines. According to some estimates, persistent landmines cause 10,000 to 20,000 casualties every year. Because these mines can remain active for an indefinite period, they remain dangerous to civilians for many decades after any legitimate need has passed. This initiative in the CD will complement the ongoing effort in the context of the Convention on Conventional Weapons to bring anti-vehicle landmines under further international controls.

While the CCW deals in particular with the use of landmines, the CD is the international community's primary forum for multilateral arms control negotiations. As such, it is well suited to address issues such as the sale and export of mines. The U.S. proposal on landmines also provides a subject for the CD to focus on, thereby enabling it to get back to work after eight years of stalemate. It will complement, not compete with, other agreements or proposals, and we urge our negotiating partners in Geneva to consider this proposal on its merits.

The United States believes that these two items would constitute a realistic work program for the CD. The truth of the matter is that the Conference could not realistically deal with many more issues after eight years of inactivity. In any event, as a number of delegations have stated in Geneva this year, the CD is unlikely in the future to reach a consensus that any other proposals are ripe for negotiation.

Mr. Chairman, while things have been bad at the CD, they have been decidedly worse at the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In 2002, the UNDC failed even to meet. In 2003, the UNDC failed to reach agreement on the two issues that it had been studying for three years. The draft study on one of those issues, conventional confidence-building measures, enjoyed a substantial measure of agreement, and its adoption by the Commission could have had some practical impact. This year, despite months of meetings and informal consultations, the UNDC failed to come to a consensus even on its agenda, despite the flexibility shown by many delegations. The United States believes that this year's UNDC resolution should instruct the UNDC to dedicate its 2005 session solely to identifying ways to improve the effectiveness of its methods of work.

Mr. Chairman, the NPT Review Conference next year is occurring at a time of unprecedented challenge to the Treaty's nonproliferation goals. Over the past decade, the international community has witnessed deliberate violations of Articles II and III of the Treaty and an announcement of withdrawal. Events of the past year have underscored the gravity of the threat.

One year ago, the international community knew nothing of the Libyan nuclear weapons program. The Libyan Government wisely chose to reveal and eliminate it, however, and with U.S. and UK assistance, and IAEA verification, that now has been accomplished.

The end of Libya's nuclear program also led to the public revelation of the clandestine Khan network, and the United States, the United Kingdom, and many other governments have shut it down. These developments made clear that additional measures are needed to strengthen the NPT and the larger nuclear nonproliferation regime. President Bush's proposals of last February were aimed at that objective and at preserving the security benefits of the Treaty.

In addition, we continue to confront an overt nuclear weapons program in North Korea. North Korea's further violations of its IAEA safeguards obligations in December 2002 led the IAEA Board of Governors to refer the case to the Security Council in February 2003. North Korea has declared its withdrawal from the NPT, and continually threatens the international community with its claims of a "nuclear deterrent." Iran's efforts to acquire a nuclear weapons capability have led to multiple violations of its IAEA safeguards agreement under the NPT. This case remains under investigation by the IAEA, and a decisive Board of Governors meeting is scheduled for November.

These events undermine the security of all nations. The NPT Review Conference must confront these developments as a matter of urgent priority. The United States urges all NPT parties to approach the Review Conference as an opportunity to endorse common approaches that will help to ensure the long-term benefits of the NPT. We urge support for measures that will promote compliance with the Treaty's nonproliferation undertakings and remedy existing violations. In that regard, vigorous efforts to achieve universal acceptance of the IAEA Additional Protocol are essential. The United States Senate unanimously voted its consent to the ratification of the Additional Protocol last March, and we are working on the steps necessary to achieve its implementation as a matter of priority.

While there are significant differences among NPT parties on aspects of Treaty implementation, Mr. Chairman, we have in common the shared belief, as stated in the preamble of the Treaty, that "the proliferation of nuclear weapons would seriously enhance the danger of nuclear war." We also share an urgent concern that responsible states act to keep nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of terrorists. The NPT is a vitally important tool in furthering these goals. Let us work together to achieve an outcome of the Review Conference that reinforces the contribution of the NPT to global security.

I am aware, Mr. Chairman, that some argue that there is also a question of compliance by the nuclear weapon states with Article VI of the Treaty. With regard to the United States, any such suggestion is both unjust and untrue. Many of you were present when I briefed the NPT Preparatory Committee in the spring about U.S. actions in compliance with Article VI. Our written statement includes a summary of those actions.

The United States has dismantled more than 13,000 nuclear weapons since 1988. Worldwide, we have withdrawn from active service more than 3,000 tactical nuclear warheads, consisting of artillery shells, warheads for short-range missile systems, and Navy depth bombs. We dismantled the last of these 3,000 warheads in 2003. By doing this, we eliminated nearly ninety percent (90%) of our non-strategic nuclear weapons. With regard to strategic weapons, the United States has eliminated more than 1,000 strategic nuclear missiles, and strategic reductions will continue as set forth in the Moscow Treaty. Once the Moscow Treaty reductions are completed in 2012, the United States will have reduced about 80 percent of the strategic nuclear warheads that we had deployed in 1991. Reductions in the number of operationally deployed weapons have paved the way for a major reduction, announced earlier this year by the National Nuclear Security Administration, in the size of the total U.S. nuclear stockpile. By 2012, the United States nuclear stockpile will be the smallest that it has been in several decades. We also would note that the United States has not produced fissile material for use in nuclear weapons for fifteen (15) years. This is a moratorium that we intend to continue, and one that we once again call on others to adopt, pending the negotiation and entry into force of a legally binding FMCT.

To my surprise, many have criticized these steps, claiming that they are insufficient, not transparent, and are easily reversed. I would remind such critics that, ten years ago, the

United States declared that it would place nuclear material considered in excess of defense needs under international safeguards. We have honored that commitment with a vigorous program that has removed huge amounts of nuclear material from weapons that we have permanently destroyed. We are proud to confirm that, since 1994, the International Atomic Energy Agency has conducted visits on multiple tons of such material. Frankly, the United States cannot imagine a more meaningful or transparent disarmament measure.

The United States, Mr. Chairman, is proud of its arms control accomplishments, including our arms control collaboration with the Russian Federation. Along with our Russian partners, we hope to table a draft resolution here in the near future to demonstrate to the international community the progress that we have made in compliance with Article VI. We hope that our draft resolution will command a consensus.

Mr. Chairman, my Government has made clear its support for the principle of "effective multilateralism." It certainly is the case that pursuing objectives in a multilateral setting takes longer and requires more effort. That, we think, is a reasonable price to pay for gaining widespread support in the international community for meaningful action on key questions. It would defy logic, however, to expect states to continue to rely on multilateral processes if doing so has the effect of preventing all action.

President Bush emphasized in his speech at Whitehall Palace our strong desire to see multilateralism work. He stated: "America and Great Britain have done, and will do, all in their power to prevent the United Nations from solemnly choosing its own irrelevance and inviting the fate of the League of Nations. It's not enough to meet the dangers of the world with resolutions; we must meet those dangers with resolve." Those in this chamber who genuinely wish to see multilateralism work need to develop that resolve and the political will to support effective action against threats like nuclear proliferation and genocide in Africa.

The First Committee, Mr. Chairman, has taken some steps toward becoming more effective. It remains to be seen, however, whether the Committee is prepared this year to adopt measures that will make it a more effective and credible body. The time has come for the other multilateral bodies in the arms control and disarmament fields to recalibrate their own methods of work to see if they, too, can make themselves more relevant to today's world.

Mr. Chairman, the United States continues to believe in the potential of the First Committee to contribute in meaningful ways to the maintenance of international peace and security. While no delegation should be expected to support measures that run counter to the security interests of its nation, the United States of America stands ready to work in good faith with others in pursuit of measures that will enhance the security of us all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.