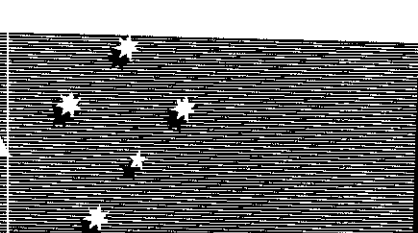


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FIRST COMMITTEE

3 October 2006



General Debate

**Statement by the Hon. Bruce Baird MP
Parliamentary Adviser to the
Australian Delegation to UNGA 61.**

(Check against delivery)



Madam Chair

The Australian delegation congratulates you on your appointment as Chair of this committee and looks forward to working closely with you over the coming month. I note that a copy of this statement will be made available on the Australian Mission's website.

As we all know too well, the international community failed to make anything at all of recent opportunities to make our world more secure through multilateral action on non-proliferation and disarmament. The 2005 NPT Review Conference, the World Summit and this year's Small Arms and Light Weapons Programme of Action Review Conference all proved unable to agree on any substantive outcomes.

We must do better. As we look forward to the commencement in 2007 of the next NPT review cycle, it is self evident that strengthened political will in dealing with non-proliferation challenges is essential if we are to preserve the benefits all states receive from the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Fresh thinking will be needed to avoid a repeat of the failed 2005 Review Conference and to better orient the NPT review process to deal with current proliferation threats. Similarly, Australia looks forward to a renewed focus in First Committee this year on practical measures to promote international peace and security.



Madam Chair

In today's complex security environment, no single tool can meet the challenges presented by states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. For this reason, we support a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to WMD proliferation, disarmament and arms control issues, including through participation in export control regimes.

Australia encourages a firmer and more active role for the Security Council on WMD proliferation. Resolution 1540 demonstrates that the responsibility for addressing the threat of WMD proliferation falls squarely within the Security Council's mandate. We welcome the Security Council's decision to extend the mandate and work of the 1540 Committee. We also support the Council's engagement on Iran's nuclear program and the DPRK's missile activities, particularly in light of the DPRK's very concerning announcement today that it plans to conduct a nuclear test.

September marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty – a treaty that would rid the world of nuclear weapons testing forever. Last year's vote in this committee demonstrated that an overwhelming number of countries regard the CTBT as a vital contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation. Through our role as CTBT Article XIV Coordinator, Australia is actively promoting the Treaty's entry into force. Australia will reintroduce the CTBT resolution into First Committee this year.

Australia will also reintroduce a resolution on landmines. Australia was one of the original signatories to the Mine Ban Convention, and as the current chair of the Meeting of States Parties, has initiated a universalisation strategy. Last year, Australia committed a further \$75 million over a five year period to mine action.

The existing multilateral proliferation and arms control framework must also be complemented by coordinated and practically focussed measures. Australia is a strong supporter of the Proliferation Security Initiative, and has long-advocated measures such as the Additional Protocol, the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and the Hague Code of Conduct as practical steps against the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. Australia is also a co-author of a new First Committee resolution that will provide the foundation for work towards an Arms Trade Treaty.

Madam Chair

It is our hope that this year's First Committee will produce strong, effective resolutions that will enable the international community to address in a practical way current and emerging threats to international peace and security. You have our unwavering support in achieving that end.

Thank you, Madam Chair.