

EXPLANATION OF VOTE

Draft Resolution L. 29: Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems

Mr. Chairman,

The United States voted against draft resolution L. 29, "Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems," because we disagree in principle with its assertion that the current level of readiness for our nuclear weapons systems "increases the risk of the use of such weapons, including unintentional or accidental use...."

The United States does not rely on launch-on-warning. Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. nuclear force posture has evolved away from rapid reaction high alert levels, and few of the operationally deployed U.S. nuclear forces are maintained on a ready alert status.

No U.S. strategic bombers are kept on alert and only a small number of U.S. SSBNs at sea are on alert at any one time. For ICBMs and SSBNs, there are also multiple rigorous procedural and technical safeguards to guard against accidental and unauthorized launch.

Managing alert levels commensurate with the prevailing security environment is fundamental to deterrence strategy. As long as nuclear weapons exist and are part of the U.S. deterrent, it is necessary for us to keep some portion of our forces at some level of alert.

The United States, Mr. Chairman, has an obligation to manage its military forces to ensure that we remain able to protect our security and fulfill our commitments to our allies. While we recognize that the sponsors of this resolution have made important changes to the original draft to