



EXPLANATION OF VOTE

Draft Resolution L. 5: Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems

Mr. Chairman,

With regards to the draft resolution L.5 “Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems,” I am speaking on behalf of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.

Mr. Chairman,

We continue to disagree with the basic premise of resolution L.5 -- that the current level of readiness of nuclear weapons increases the risk of their use, including through unintentional or accidental use.

We would like to restate that the operational readiness of our respective nuclear weapons systems is maintained at a level consonant with our national security requirements and our obligations to our allies, within the larger context of the current global strategic situation. In reflection thereof, and as we have said before in the UN, the CD, and on other occasions, we have decreased the operational readiness and alert levels of our respective forces since the early 1990s. Additionally, our respective nuclear weapon systems are no longer targeted against any state. Collectively, those steps have reduced the value of further “de-alerting” as a priority for nuclear disarmament, in our view.

Unhelpfully, the present resolution proceeds from the presumption that lowered alert levels will automatically and in all cases lead to

heightened international security. In reality, while alert levels can and have been lowered in response to an improved international security climate, the relationship between alert levels and security is complex, and not reducible to such simple formulaic responses.

We would also like to reiterate that our nuclear weapons systems are subject to the most rigorous command and control systems, to ensure against the possibility of accidental or unintentional use, and to guarantee that such weapons could only be used at the sole direction of the proper national command authority.