

As prepared for delivery
Statement by
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on Compliance with Non-proliferation, Arms Limitation and Disarmament Agreements
and Commitments,
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance, and Implementation, I am pleased to have this opportunity to address this body on the issue of compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments and, on behalf of my country and co-sponsors, to offer for this body's consideration a resolution on the subject. As some may recall, this body collectively last considered and adopted a resolution on compliance three years ago.

Mr. Chairman, the resolution that we and our co-sponsors are bringing before you this year is both a reiteration of the commitment of the membership of this body to compliance and recognition of the strides we have made and the challenges that we continue to face. The resolution, which is entitled "Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments," seeks, in the first instance, to bring again the issue of compliance to the attention of the international community. Like its predecessor resolution in 2005, it also seeks to underscore that compliance is critical to international peace and security and to exhort governments to seek common cause in pursuit of diplomatic means to bring violators back into compliance. This resolution, however, goes beyond the 2005 text in that it also seeks to encourage countries to provide assistance, as appropriate, to build national, regional and international capacity for the implementation of verification and compliance obligations.

Looking back over the last three years, I believe that we all can agree that there has been notable progress in both our collective appreciation of the relevance of compliance to peace and security and of the role that each of us can play in ensuring both our own compliance and encouraging the compliance of other states.

We seek to move toward consensus that compliance by states with their non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament treaties, agreements and commitments is critical to international peace, stability and security and is at the very foundation of the international system. This is reflected in, for example, the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and International Atomic Energy Agency, and the decisions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It also is reflected in the discussions of compliance, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and withdrawal at the 2007 and 2008 Preparatory Conferences for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. And, it is reflected in the consensus report of the 16-nation UN Panel of Government Experts on "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification."

But, awareness of the importance of compliance, while essential, is but one necessary step. The next is to undertake to strengthen national, regional, and international capacities for effective

verification, compliance, and enforcement of non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament obligations. This means helping countries who need and request help to implement their obligations. It also means helping countries who wish to strengthen their confidence in a regime to conduct their own compliance assessments, or develop regional capabilities, or to contribute more fully to international efforts. Five of the Verification Panel's recommendations addressed steps to build and strengthen such capacities. The practical work that member states and regional organizations like the European Union (EU) have undertaken to provide support and assistance pursuant to UNSCR 1540 is a concrete manifestation that states take seriously the relevance to compliance of building the capacity to implement fully obligations.

Very significant challenges to international security and stability remain, most notably but not exclusively, in the sphere of nuclear nonproliferation. For this reason, there is no more important time than now, when the international community is facing significant noncompliance challenges, for the community to use all available tools, including this resolution, to express its strongest and broadest endorsement of compliance and to urge states that are not currently in compliance with their obligations to come back into compliance.

Mr. Chairman, the United States, the co-sponsors of this resolution, and the overwhelming majority of the other nations represented here today consider the state of compliance of other states parties with their non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments when making calculations of how best to maintain and ensure their own security. Few, if any, of us sitting here today would be likely to enter into any agreement – be it multilateral or bilateral – if we believed that other parties were unlikely to comply with its terms. When we adhere to a treaty, we want to know whether the other parties also are complying, we want to discover noncompliance early enough to be able to deny violators any benefit from such noncompliance, and we want to know that the international community will work diligently to encourage and induce violators to reverse their noncompliance and come back into compliance.

The resolution that we are offering for consideration today can be an important component of our collective diplomatic efforts to underscore the importance of compliance, to develop our individual and collective capacities for compliance, and to encourage a return to compliance by states that are not currently in compliance with their obligations.

Mr. Chairman, the strides that we collectively have made to date toward recognition of the impact of noncompliance on our collective security and toward holding states accountable for their noncompliance are important. But, more must be done. Noncompliance continues to pose significant challenges to our collective security and to the integrity of the international system. There are no easy answers to the noncompliance issues that we face. The question is, are we up to the challenges they pose? The United States believes that we are, and that this resolution can make a useful contribution in reflecting our commitment to acting together to strengthen compliance.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee, for your attention to these issues. We welcome broad co-sponsorship and encourage widespread support for this important resolution.