

Statement by the United States

Main Committee II

The Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Statement by Ambassador Adam M. Scheinman

**New York
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Madam Chair, I congratulate you on your appointment and wish you every success.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons poses profound, even existential dangers to international peace and security, and the NPT is the cornerstone of our efforts to prevent it. All states benefit when they know that other states will not acquire nuclear weapons.

The NPT's nonproliferation benefits also have a positive influence on its other two pillars: nonproliferation efforts are a necessary condition for progress toward achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and for facilitating peaceful nuclear cooperation among parties, giving suppliers confidence that their nuclear assistance will not be diverted to weapons activities.

These nonproliferation benefits depend on compliance with the Treaty, as verified through IAEA safeguards. The comprehensive safeguards agreements implementing NPT Article III provide vital assurances that material in civil nuclear programs that is declared by a state is not diverted for weapons.

However, as all here know, it has been necessary to strengthen the safeguards regime in response to revelations of clandestine nuclear programs. The Additional Protocol is an essential part of our response to these threats. With 138 adherents, the Protocol provides the Agency with means to respond to indications of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

The IAEA uses the Protocol to confirm that states' declarations are both correct and complete. This enables the Agency to provide credible assurances about non-diversion of declared nuclear material and the absence of undeclared nuclear material.

Consequently, the combination of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an Additional Protocol has become the widely accepted *de facto* standard for achieving the safeguards objectives of the NPT. This Conference should acknowledge that fact.

In the face of growing demands on IAEA resources, safeguards must remain technically effective, credible, and impartial. The Agency requires our political, financial, and technical support to carry out this mission and ensure its authority and independence. Concerning AUKUS, my delegation wishes to align itself with the statements of Australia and the United Kingdom and make clear that we are working with the IAEA to ensure this propulsion project meets the highest possible nonproliferation standards.

Nuclear export controls, required under Article III, are another essential nonproliferation measure. Like safeguards, export controls cannot remain static while proliferation challenges evolve. And they have not. UN Security Council Resolution 1540 requires all States to adopt and enforce effective measures to control exports of items related to weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Nuclear industry also plays an important role by promoting high nonproliferation standards, including through implementation of effective export controls and the application of “safeguards by design” principles in new nuclear facilities.

The threat of nuclear terrorism by non-state actors persists. This threat demands a robust global nuclear security architecture, with measures to prevent, detect, and respond to unauthorized acts involving nuclear and radioactive material. Such measures reinforce the NPT by helping prevent proliferation to and from non-state actors.

Madam Chair, states with civil separated plutonium share important responsibilities to ensure such weapons-usable material is accounted for and remains outside of weapons. All states pursuing the civil use of plutonium must be transparent about their stocks.

In this regard, all nine states subscribing to the Plutonium Management Guidelines should report their civil plutonium holdings annually without fail. Unfortunately, one state has failed to do so in recent years.

Further, any nuclear-weapon state separating civil plutonium from spent fuel should consider allowing the IAEA to apply safeguards on such plutonium under its voluntary offer Safeguards agreement. All states should also ensure that the product of any such reprocessing is in a form as far from weapon-usable as possible.

Finally, my delegation wishes to emphasize that to avoid the unnecessary accumulation of weapons-usable plutonium stocks in the civilian sector, all states should refrain from using so-called “breeder blankets” in fast-neutron reactors and, if used, to make the associated fissile material available to appropriate IAEA safeguards during any subsequent reprocessing. These steps together would greatly enhance the international community’s confidence that civil facilities are not used for the separation of plutonium that potentially might benefit military purposes in the future or pose an attractive target for theft.

Meeting high standards of safeguards, export controls, and nuclear security is a challenge, particularly for countries with limited resources. The United States, the IAEA, and others assist states in developing the capacity to meet these standards. The United States encourages all states that seek such assistance to take full advantage of the resources available, and all states in a position to do so to offer such assistance.

Madam Chair, there is much good news to report on nonproliferation over the history of the NPT. The record of achievements is long and the regime that has evolved over time is one we can all take great pride in having helped to bring about and sustain.

Nearly all NPT Parties comply fully with their NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations. Unfortunately, there remain a few unresolved cases of noncompliance that pose a serious challenge. To preserve the integrity of the NPT, we must together oppose new cases of proliferation and act decisively to ensure that violators do not benefit from noncompliance.

Madam Chair, my delegation will look forward to addressing this concern, as well as nuclear-weapon-free zones, in our statement to the Subsidiary Body on regional issues.

Thank you.