

Statement by the United States

**Main Committee II
Topical Debate on Safeguards**

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

Statement by Senior Advisor Thomas Countryman

**New York
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Madam Chair,

I would like to elaborate on U.S. views of the role of international safeguards in implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Recall that the purpose of safeguards in the NPT is to prevent the diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This is reflected in the basic obligation of a State Party to a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement to accept safeguards on all nuclear material, and in its technical objective of detecting the diversion of nuclear material.

The purposes of safeguards, therefore, are to provide assurance, through verification, and to notify the international community when concerns arise in order to deter and respond to any non-compliance. While the implementation of Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements should be designed to provide those assurances, in practice the IAEA will only issue the so-called “broader conclusion” for states in which inspectors have available the additional information and access tools provided by the Additional Protocol. It is through this broader conclusion that the IAEA provides assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear activities.

This is why the combination of a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and an Additional Protocol has become the *de facto* standard for achieving NPT safeguards objectives and any text agreed at this Conference should reflect that fact. In that regard, we were pleased to join the statement issued August 5 by the ASEAN Regional Forum on preserving Southeast Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, which called for strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA

safeguards regime, including through universalization of the Additional Protocol. And as we will note separately, we believe the Additional Protocol should be the standard for nuclear exports as well.

Where applicable, the modified Small Quantities Protocol is also part of that standard. As IAEA Director General Grossi said: “the original SQP is simply not adequate for our current safeguards system.” We are concerned by the statement in the Safeguards Implementation Report for 2021 that “[t]he Agency’s ability to draw a credible and soundly-based annual safeguards conclusion for ... States [with original SQPs] is ... significantly affected” by the lack of information and access.

Madam Chair,

Implementation of these standard safeguards instruments should not be a burden to peaceful nuclear programs, particularly as the IAEA and many of its Member States offer assistance in their implementation. In particular, we welcome the IAEA’s new capacity-building initiative known as COMPASS. We welcome the availability of such assistance, encourage states that need assistance to take advantage of it, and encourage states in a position to do so to join in providing such assistance.

We stress that effective implementation of safeguards requires cooperation between the State and the IAEA and note with concern a number of cases where the IAEA has reported that the required cooperation has not been forthcoming. We also express concern about past incidents of harassment of IAEA inspectors.

The need for such cooperation is stated in the preamble to the NPT, which expresses the “undertaking to co-operate in facilitating the application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on peaceful nuclear activities,” and in the text of Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, which say “[the State] and the Agency shall co-operate to facilitate the implementation of the safeguards provided for in this Agreement.”

We would therefore call on all states with safeguards agreements in force to cooperate fully with the IAEA in their implementation in order to enable the IAEA to fulfill its responsibilities and provide the requisite assurances to the international community. This Conference should call for all Parties to cooperate fully with the IAEA in the implementation of their safeguards obligations and to not harass or intimidate IAEA inspectors.

Madam Chair,

I would like to recall yesterday's statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Seven in support of the IAEA's efforts to promote nuclear safety and security and apply safeguards at the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine. We remain profoundly concerned by the seizure of Ukrainian nuclear facilities by Russian armed forces, which undermines the IAEA's ability to monitor Ukraine's peaceful nuclear activities for safeguards purposes. Against this background, we underline the importance of facilitating a mission of IAEA experts, including safeguards inspectors under the authority of Ukraine's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol, to the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant to address safeguards concerns in a manner that respects full Ukrainian sovereignty over its territory and infrastructure.

Finally, regarding the issue of safeguards implementation related to naval nuclear propulsion, I would like to note that such programs are allowed under both the NPT and Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements. We believe states that pursue such programs must do so in a manner consistent with their obligations under the NPT and their safeguards agreements. The application of measures that provide continuous verification assurance that nuclear material used in naval nuclear propulsion is not diverted to weapons purposes is critical. The AUKUS partners, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, are committed to achieving the highest possible standard for the IAEA safeguards approach for nuclear material used in Australia's naval nuclear propulsion program, an approach made possible by Australia's exemplary nonproliferation credentials. We believe the additional transparency made possible by the Additional Protocol is essential to such verification arrangements.

Thank you, Madam Chair.