

Statement by the United States

Main Committee I

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
August 4, 2022**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States looks forward to supporting you and the work of this Committee. I will deliver a shortened version of my remarks, but will submit the full version for the record.

Mr. Chairman,

For more than a half century, the NPT has made irreplaceable contributions to international security.

In this Committee, we are here to work together, anchored by our good faith and a directive to pursue effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm our steadfast commitment to Article VI of the NPT and to creating a secure world without nuclear weapons.

The United States is committed to this work through both word and deed. As is outlined in our National Report, we have reduced the total U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, reduced the role of nuclear weapons in our national defense strategy, and reduced our stocks of fissile material and the associated infrastructure.

We know it is not enough. In his letter to this Conference, President Biden made clear that the United States will continue the long work toward eventual nuclear disarmament. It is a commitment based on our national security interests and on our deep-seated understanding of the humanitarian impacts of the use of nuclear weapons.

As Secretary Blinken said, “any country that asks others to reject the pursuit of nuclear weapons, also has to be willing to reduce – and eventually eliminate –their own stockpiles of nuclear weapons.”

Last year, we once again released information on our nuclear stockpile. As of September 2020, this stockpile consisted of 3,750 warheads. That is a 26% reduction since the 2010 Review Conference. And since the 2015 Review Conference, the United States has dismantled more than 800 nuclear warheads, with approximately 2,000 more retired and awaiting dismantlement.

Mr. Chairman, earlier this year the United States completed the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which underlines the importance and mutually reinforcing nature of deterrence and arms control. As directed by the President, the United States will also examine steps to further reduce the risk of nuclear war and the global salience of nuclear weapons. We have chosen to act with restraint in the interest of avoiding actions that could unintentionally add to tensions or misinterpretation. And I would emphasize that all NPT nuclear-weapon states have an obligation to act responsibly.

The United States does not use nuclear weapons to advance an expansionist security policy. We are not developing nuclear-armed hypersonic glide vehicles, nuclear-armed hypersonic cruise missiles, or ballistic or cruise missiles having a dual nuclear and conventional role. And we are not deploying nuclear-armed, land-based missiles outside of our national territory. Two other NPT nuclear-weapon states cannot make each claim.

From its first days in office, the U.S. administration moved swiftly to engage the Russian Federation to extend New START by a five years, through 2026. The United States also pushed for the resumption of a U.S.-Russia Strategic Stability Dialogue (SSD) aimed at reducing risk and laying the groundwork for future arms control. We seek to maintain limits on all intercontinental-range nuclear weapons and develop new constraints on non-deployed nuclear weapons and theater-range, or nonstrategic, nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

We stand ready to resume dialogue with Russia to shape the future of modern arms control, provided Russia is prepared to operate in good faith.

We must also maintain and expand our channels of communication with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and to engage in long-overdue discussions on risk reduction. Beijing’s accelerating build-up of nuclear weapons and excessive

nuclear opacity increases the chance of inadvertent conflict, miscommunication and the potential for destabilizing arms racing.

Mr. Chairman, the United States supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and is committed to work to achieve its entry into force. We call on all states possessing nuclear weapons to join us in declaring and maintaining a zero-yield moratorium on nuclear explosive testing.

We also continue to support the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty – or FMCT – which would limit the dangers of a new nuclear arms race. We strongly encourage all states to join us in observing a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, pending negotiation of such a treaty. We have all waited too long for this next crucial step in multilateral arms control.

To improve understanding and shape future efforts, we continue to pursue the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

The United States also continues to advance strategic risk reduction. As noted in our working paper (#55), the United States has a long history of negotiating and implementing measures aimed at reducing the risk of strategic misunderstanding and conflict and preventing nuclear war. Risk reduction merits special attention at this Review Conference and we look forward to discussions on ways to carry it forward.

In January, the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states affirmed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. We have been deeply disturbed by the Russian Federation's nuclear saber-rattling in the weeks and months after joining that statement.

My fellow colleagues, to be clear: any use of a nuclear weapon would have far-reaching consequences and increase the risk of catastrophic escalation. Our understanding of what is at stake is why we are committed to turning ideas about risk reduction into actions.

The United States recognizes its responsibility to lead on nuclear disarmament. We have a long road ahead of us, but through persistent, pragmatic and progressive actions, as well as involvement of all NPT nuclear-weapon states, we can fulfill the disarmament commitments to the NPT that we all share. Thank you.

