

Opening Statement by the United States of America

Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Good morning, everyone.

In a globalized modernity notable for its dizzying pace of technological development and rate of sweeping social and political change, half a century is a very long time. Yet it has indeed been fully 50 years since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) opened for signature. Today, we open this Preparatory Committee as part of the NPT's review cycle, meeting in Geneva – the lovely “second city” of the auspicious United Nations organization that a traumatized but hopeful international community built at the close of the last and most horrible of the global conflagrations that convulsed the 20th Century world.

This meeting provides the opportunity reflect on our common interests in maintaining the Treaty and our shared responsibility to strengthen the NPT regime in all its aspects – including the security benefits it provides to all States Party. It also provides an opportunity to recall the central role of nonproliferation in achieving the full benefits of the Treaty. An effective nonproliferation regime is a key element in building security conditions conducive to progress on nuclear disarmament. Sound nonproliferation conditions also facilitate cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy by building confidence that peaceful nuclear programs will not be misused or diverted for weapons.

This occasion – the “Golden Anniversary” of accession to the NPT becoming available to the countries of the world – is one upon which it behooves us to look back and remember the long arc of our collective nonproliferation story.

The Promise and Peril of Nuclear Knowledge

But it not just because of this particular legal instrument that we gather today. In the broadest sense, we are here because in our grandfathers' day, the restless

human intellect was able to wrest from their obscurity certain deep secrets about how to manipulate the structure of the universe. We are here because this knowledge enabled humans to forge tools of previously unimaginable power – power so great that it bestowed the capacity not just to lay waste to an opponent with shocking ease and finality, but indeed also to create for the first time in history the danger that humankind, in its imprudence, might actually destroy itself.

At the same time, however, this awful, Promethean gift also held the key to great benefits for humankind. These benefits were not just limited to the paradoxical one of bringing to an apparent close the epoch of periodic, direct Great Power warfare that had produced a string of global conflicts over several hundred years – conflicts that had become ever more bloody and destructive as the fruits of the Industrial Revolution were applied to improve our ability to slaughter each other with conventional weaponry.

Beyond even that, this portentous gift of nuclear knowledge also held the key to entirely new realms of scientific progress – in medicine, agriculture, food safety, consumer products, desalination, and the generation of all but boundless amounts of clean energy to produce light, heat, and electricity for a populous and productive world, and in ways that would not blacken our skies, choke our lungs, or threaten to turn our planet into a fetid greenhouse.

We are here today, therefore, because this gift manifested itself so powerfully, both as bane and as boon. The NPT is a key part of our collective struggle with how to reap the benefits of this new knowledge while minimizing the risk that its dark side will sweep away all the good it has to offer.

Nonproliferation Challenges Today

Today, the nonproliferation regime faces great threats. I shall mention here just three:

- First, the regime faces an immediate challenge from the development of nuclear weaponry and delivery systems by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) – a country that violated the NPT and a host of other nonproliferation commitments, sought to withdraw from them when caught in this betrayal, clings to these capabilities in violation of a host of legally-binding U.N. Security Council resolutions, and has yet to return to compliance.

- Second, the nonproliferation regime faces a very different, but still very real, longer-term challenge from Iran – a country that for years illegally and secretly sought to develop nuclear weapons, suspended its weaponization work only when confronted by the potentially direst of consequences without ever coming clean about its illicit endeavors, for several more years continued its efforts to enrich uranium in violation of legally-binding UN Security Council requirements, and retains the ability to position itself, several years hence, dangerously close to rapid weaponization.
- Third, the nonproliferation regime faces a challenge from those who still resist more than two decades’ of progress in improving nuclear safeguards. It has been more than a quarter century since the First Iraq War revealed that the IAEA’s implementation of Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements was inadequate to prevent the misuse of nuclear knowledge in undeclared activities. Since then, the international community has been working to bring global safeguards up to a more effective standard that can help sustain the world of peaceful nuclear cooperation and development into the future – most notably, with the development and subsequent promulgation of the Additional Protocol. This salutary movement for safeguards integrity remains at risk, however, from those who continue to resist these new standards, as well as from a new disarmament instrument that clings to an outdated safeguards standards and even, on its face, claims to supersede the NPT.

We must also recognize that the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament can only feasibly be addressed as a real-world policy problem in the context of the overall security environment. Unfortunately, deteriorating security conditions have made near-term prospects for progress on disarmament bleak. We cannot overlook the actions of those states that are expanding and modernizing their nuclear stockpiles, threatening their neighbors, like the Russian Government, and violating their arms control obligations. We also cannot ignore the deleterious impact on our collective security of the repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria and the recent chemical weapons attack in Salisbury. The flouting of this critical international norm should be of great concern to us all. We invite all NPT Parties to engage in a constructive discourse on creating conditions to facilitate further progress on nuclear disarmament, “desiring to further the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States in order to facilitate” nuclear disarmament, as the NPT Preamble states.

These challenges are obviously very real, and I cannot pretend not to be gravely concerned by them. I would like to emphasize, however, that the existence and continued salience of these challenges should not blind us – in this Golden Anniversary year of the NPT’s opening for signature in 1968 – to how far the international community has nonetheless come with the creation and maintenance of the present nonproliferation regime. It is certainly easy to see the dark clouds that swirl around us, but it is also important not to forget all the good that this regime has done – and all the good that it can continue to do, if we let it.

Grim Forebodings Reassessed

After the first nuclear explosion – the “Trinity” test that so famously rent the dawn of a cool July morning in Alamogordo, New Mexico, in 1945 – the head of the U.S. Government’s Manhattan Project that had developed the atomic bomb said that he had at that moment recalled a line from the Bhagavad Gita: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” In subsequent decades, this invocation of the Gita by Robert Oppenheimer has lingered in our nuclear folk memory as an evocative signal of the dark portentousness of nuclear technology, signifying all its capacity for harm and destruction. Indeed, you can still find videos on YouTube of a grim-faced Dr. Oppenheimer telling this story in later years, wiping a tear from his eye as he recounts his feelings of unease and ambivalence at seeing the dangerous new thing he had helped create.

But I’d like to suggest that this folk memory may overstate the case, or at least that it leaves out some aspects that we here at this Preparatory Committee in 2018 should also remember. In fact, as I understand it, Dr. Oppenheimer may have gotten his quotation subtly wrong. The language in question appears in the 37th line of the 11th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita – which is itself part of the sixth book of the magnificent and sprawling Hindu epic, the Mahabharata. In the quoted line, by most modern translations of which I am aware, Lord Krishna describes himself not as Death, but as “all-powerful Time, which destroys all things.”

This is, I think, not a trivial difference. Perhaps Dr. Oppenheimer’s invocation of the Gita does not have to be seen as quite such the grim, even morbid, prediction of doleful consequences that it is usually seen to be. Indeed, though Krishna’s pronouncement is perhaps in few readings an entirely cheerful thought, the words may arguably be read as a meditation upon impermanence: a reminder of the fact that it is in the nature of Time to erode all solidities – including, perhaps, the perceived certainties of our own fears, assumptions, and predictions of good or ill.

If this is so, perhaps we can use this invocation today as an exhortation to look back along the axis of certainty-eroding Time in order to remember just how far we have come in the half century since the NPT first took life. If we undertake this exploration, I submit, we can learn – or re-learn – valuable lessons about the many benefits that have been brought to Mankind by the NPT, and by the associated nonproliferation regime that we have all built together.

A look at this history can help us remember how our collective success in building and maintaining the global nonproliferation regime has helped refute the certainties of grim foreboding that many of our predecessors once had, fearing that humankind would find itself unable to enjoy the benefits of nuclear technology while avoiding the worst of its dangers. We have, together, done rather better than they feared.

There is, of course, no guarantee that we will continue to be able to have such benefits without catastrophe; Krishna's Time presumably subverts certainties and solidities both good and bad. I would submit, however, that if we can remember how far we have nonetheless come, we can use this insight to help us recommit ourselves to the success of the NPT and the nonproliferation regime in the future.

A History of Proliferation Predictions

So let us look back a bit at the history of the nuclear age in order to explore what it is that the NPT and the associated nonproliferation regime has brought us – and what we would presumably be forgoing if we allow our commitment to this regime to slacken in the years ahead.

For my part, I have found a fascinating starting point for understanding this history in the series of U.S. Government National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) and other intelligence assessments on nuclear weapons proliferation that have in recent years been declassified and released, pursuant to our Freedom of Information Act, from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. These documents projected the likely future of the nuclear world during the period before and just after the development of the NPT. I believe these windows into the past reward attention from anyone interested in the Treaty's future.

What is perhaps most striking about these assessments is the degree to which it was assumed that a very significant degree of nuclear weapons proliferation was all but inevitable.

Even leaving aside the possibility that a weapons possessor would actually help them with such work, it was assessed by an NIE in 1957, for instance, that “up to 10” additional countries could develop nuclear weapons “using only native resources” in the next decade or so. These included France, Canada, Sweden, West Germany, and Belgium – with India, Italy, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Norway, and the Netherlands being positioned to have this option over a somewhat longer period of time if they wished. Those conclusions went principally to capability, rather than intent, but in terms of actual prediction the NIE went so far as to declare that Sweden was “likely” to develop nuclear weapons by 1961 – with France probably arriving at that destination even earlier, by 1958. Both China and Japan were also assessed likely to “seek to develop weapons production programs within the next decade,” at least if Japan were able to acquire more access to fissile material. According to the NIE, the chances of Japan weaponizing were “about even.”

That 1957 assessment was also alive to the degree to which each new country’s acquisition of nuclear weapons was likely to increase the pressures upon others to do so. Once France weaponized, it worried, West Germany would feel increasing pressure to do so – and this might lead to demands by Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands for some kind of “pooled” nuclear deterrent independent of the United States’ own unilateral holdings. If China developed the atomic bomb, moreover – as it “almost certainly” would try to do – the NIE noted that pressure would increase upon India to do so. Even Canada, it declared, was felt “likely to become increasingly insistent on obtaining nuclear weapons from the U.S. for air defense purposes, particularly if other fourth countries acquire nuclear capabilities.” If the United States didn’t provide such weapons, it was said, Canada “would almost certainly” develop its own.

The U.S. Government reached similar conclusions in a 1958 NIE on proliferation, declaring that in the next decade “a large number of individual countries” would be able to produce nuclear weapons. By this point U.S. analysts were apparently more sanguine about Japan, saying that there was no sign of any decision in Tokyo to pursue nuclear weapons and that one was indeed “unlikely” during the next decade.

The 1958 assessment, however, was still quite clear about the potential consequences of nuclear weapons proliferation, should it occur. The NIE declared that in general – even putting aside the possibility that atomic weapons would get into the hands of “almost totally irresponsible governments” – proliferation would clearly increase the risk of war involving nuclear weapons, and perhaps even of

general war. This conclusion was repeated in a 1960 NIE, which said that “[a]ny increase in the number of nuclear powers could raise the chance that nuclear weapons would be used. It would also increase the dangers which could flow from actions taken through miscalculation or desperation.” According to another NIE in 1963, nuclear proliferation over the next ten years was unlikely to upend the system of Great Power relations, but it did seem likely to produce “greater unpredictability of relations within and between alliance systems, and the possibility that hostilities arising out of existing or future controversies could escalate into a serious confrontation involving the major powers.”

U.S. intelligence assessments from this period also noted the degree to which proliferation pressures – and thus the likelihood of nuclear weapons development by additional states – depended not just upon whether countries’ neighbors or rivals weaponized, but also upon their more general perceptions of risk and challenge in the international environment. The nature and perceived trends in international conditions, it made clear, were critical variables.

In the 1960 NIE, the U.S. Intelligence Community assessed that Eastern European states within the Warsaw Pact were unlikely to become proliferators because their masters in the Soviet Union would not permit this. U.S. alliance relationships in Europe also exerted a restraining force, such that “[i]n the present atmosphere of international politics – and probably for the next several years – West Germany, and other European countries are unlikely to press for an independent joint European effort in the nuclear weapons field.” Sweden was similarly felt to be holding a nuclear weapons decision “in abeyance,” but “a serious degeneration of the international situation” would likely push Stockholm into the weapons business.

The 1960 NIE clearly felt that U.S. alliance relationships, our “extended deterrence” posture, and the stabilizing effect of our overseas engagement upon regional geopolitics were powerful – and, so far, fairly successful – nonproliferation tools. It concluded that proliferation would be far more likely if European or other states entertained doubts about the strength of U.S. security guarantees against Soviet or Chinese aggression and concluded that indigenous nuclear weapons were thus the only way to guarantee their own security. An NIE in 1961 effectively reemphasized this point, suggesting that Sweden, West Germany, and Japan were presently unlikely to seek nuclear weapons, but might each revisit the question if confronted by a worsening of international security threats. Similarly, in 1966, an NIE found that “U.S. treaty guarantees and

pressures will probably dissuade the Japanese from acquiring nuclear weapons during the next few years.”

By the early 1960s, in other words, we already see important themes emerging in the U.S. intelligence analysis. First, it was clear that a great many additional countries had at least the potential to develop nuclear weapons if they felt a need for such tools. Second, we see a recognition of the dependence of such decision-making upon a broad range of international conditions, including whether the United States was able to use its own security relationships to persuade other leaders that weaponization was unnecessary despite security threats from Moscow and Beijing. Third, it was clear that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons required concerted effort and activity. As described in an NIE in 1964, for instance, Soviet and U.S. policies had fortunately been able to have “some effect in hindering the proliferation of nuclear weapons” as these countries applied “pressure against potential proliferators” – but it was clear that continuing such success would require attention on an ongoing basis.

With the 1958 and 1966 NIEs, we also see the emergence of worries that the existing system of nuclear safeguards – which was in those days a purely bilateral and highly contingent system, left to whatever arrangements happened to be negotiated between individual nuclear technology suppliers and recipient states – would do little to preclude diversion of nuclear technology and prevent nuclear weapons development. “There is no formal agreement in existence among all potential suppliers,” the 1966 NIE complained, “that safeguards will be applied to reactors or nuclear materials or equipment; such safeguards as are supplied result from unilateral decisions of the suppliers.” In light of these challenges, officials were beginning to wonder how the international community might do better in forestalling these dangers and preserving an environment safely conducive to peaceful nuclear cooperation.

This was particularly important because the continued development and diffusion of nuclear technology was steadily adding states to the NIEs’ lists of countries that had weaponization within their technical reach. By 1966, for instance, a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate enumerated a great many governments that might consider nuclear weapons development over the following decade, though the degree of difficulty and odds of success for each government clearly varied tremendously. In that assessment – made after China had already conducted its first nuclear weapon test in 1964 – this list included Australia, India, Indonesia, Israel, Pakistan, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Arab Republic (i.e., Egypt and Syria), and West Germany. On the whole, it was still

true that “very few” such governments seemed likely to try to weaponize soon, but the NIE expressed concern about what it called a possible “snowball effect” of cascading proliferation, as each additional country acquiring nuclear weapons both increased the pressure on others to do so and undermined international faith in the ability of nonproliferation policies to prevent a deluge.

Emergence of the NPT

Fortunately, in response to such worries, and the clear need for a better answer to the growing proliferation challenges facing the international community, diplomatic efforts during the 1960s increasingly focused upon the possibility of what the 1963 NIE described as a “nondiffusion agreement.” These efforts began to take multilateral form with the famous 1961 “Irish Resolution” at the U.N. General Assembly – a combination of weapon-state non-transfer commitments and non-weapon-state non-acquisition commitments that became the conceptual core of the NPT itself seven years later, and the basis for its first two Articles. Far from giving in to despair about proliferation, in other words, the international community tried to band together in order to do a better job of forestalling it.

Nevertheless, if you continue to follow the path of declassified U.S. intelligence assessments, it will be clear that the emerging Treaty was, at the time, hardly felt to offer a particularly propitious solution. Indeed, proliferation NIEs were notably pessimistic about the ability of the emerging NPT-based nonproliferation regime to do its core job of preventing further proliferation.

According to the 1966 NIE, for instance, multilateral regimes could indeed “impose legal, moral, and political restraints of some consequence,” but even if the United States and the USSR continued to “bring considerable pressure to bear” to get countries to sign the NPT and pressure would-be proliferators to rethink weaponization plans, there was still little that could be done to prevent a determined country from developing nuclear weapons. A CIA research study in 1975, in fact, reached an even grimmer conclusion, questioning whether it was still true at all that the benefits of nuclear technology could be widely shared while minimizing the spread of weapon capabilities. “This assumption,” it declared, “is now being challenged as rapidly as the civilian/military distinction in nuclear resources is fading,” as technology and materials have become increasingly widespread, and as legal restraints on proliferation “have lost much of their effectiveness because of growing political confrontation between industrialized and less developed countries.”

That 1975 CIA research study is particularly noteworthy, coming as it did after the NPT had come into force and after India's decision in 1974 to test a nuclear explosive device manufactured from plutonium extracted from a reactor supplied for peaceful purposes. This Indian test, the CIA study assessed, had now "probably initiated a second phase of nuclear proliferation, a phase quite distinct in pace and variety of nuclear actors." According to the CIA, nuclear "materials and technology are already too widely available for technical safeguards and international regulations to be effective," and political pressure against proliferators "often tends only to confirm the view that the nuclear haves are trying to keep a valuable prize from the have-nots." All in all, the study concluded, "further proliferation seems inevitable." It predicted a future characterized by "an increased number but also an increased diversity of nuclear actors" including "nuclear superpowers, regional nuclear powers, nuclear abstainers, closet nuclear powers, nuclear explosives powers, and, possibly, nuclear terrorists." As a means to prevent all this, the CIA declared, "the NPT is questionable," for "there is no hope of preventing nuclear proliferation in the sense of controlling the number of nuclear actors."

Half a Century of Successes

But it is in part precisely this pessimism, in the early days of the NPT, that leads me to believe that we can learn from studying that period. We sit here today in 2018, more than four decades after the CIA's fatalistic conclusion in 1975 that there was "no hope ... of controlling the number of nuclear actors." Yet if you discount India – whose nuclear tests in 1998 were more a fulfillment of its 1974 decision than a genuinely new phenomenon – during all the years since that pessimistic CIA study, only two new states have openly declared that they possess nuclear weapons: Pakistan, outside the NPT; and North Korea, which announced its withdrawal from the Treaty after it was caught cheating.

Over these decades, moreover, nuclear weapons efforts in quite a few countries have been shut down. The end of such programs occurred for a variety of reasons about which it can be difficult to generalize, including: the development of fairly robust nonproliferation norms and international inspection mechanisms; vigorous and sustained nonproliferation pressures from the United States, including with friendly governments, often coupled with repeated reassurances of alliance protection and "extended deterrence" guarantees; the end of the Cold War; domestic changes of government or regime change in the countries in question; and even forcible denuclearization. Yet they did occur.

As a number of scholars have outlined in open sources, a great many countries appear to have explored the idea of indigenous nuclear weapons development – albeit with varying degrees of seriousness and success. Both Brazil and Argentina did, for example, beginning in the late 1960s or so, keeping up these pursuits until 1990, when they mutually agreed to give up those pursuits and enter into a reciprocal, bilateral inspection regime. Between the mid-1950s and the end of the 1970s, it has been reported that exploratory nuclear weapons programs of varying duration and complexity existed in Australia, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Norway, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, and West Germany.

Yugoslavia reportedly sought nuclear weaponry on a sporadic basis from at least 1954 until perhaps 1987, while Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Romania also explored the possibility right up until his regime’s collapse in 1989. Indonesia in 1964 actually announced an intention to develop nuclear weaponry, though this effort apparently did not survive the turmoil of 1965 and Muhammad Suharto’s takeover of power two years later.

More dramatically, the apartheid regime in South Africa – which had begun a nuclear weapons program in the 1970s, and by 1989 possessed six uranium-based, “gun-type” gravity bombs – chose to give up its nuclear weapons in 1989-91 and join the NPT before the 1994 democratic elections that ushered in Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress government. Thousands of strategic and “tactical” nuclear weapons left stranded in the territories of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus by the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1991, moreover, were peacefully and successfully repatriated to the Russian Federation after the end of the Cold War.

Despite having been provided with uranium enrichment technology and even nuclear weapons designs by the Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan, moreover, Libya was prevailed upon by the United States and Britain to shut down and peacefully eliminate its nuclear weapons program in 2003-04. In less congenial circumstances, Iraq’s clandestine nuclear program was forcibly ended with the Gulf War of 1991, thereafter being kept in check by a uniquely robust system of United Nations inspections until the destruction of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003. Syria’s efforts to pursue nuclear weapons – conducted with North Korean assistance in the form of the provision of a plutonium production reactor – were also ended by force, by Israel in 2007.

So today, four decades after the CIA felt there to be “no hope” of preventing a cascade of proliferation, we face far fewer direct challenges to the global

nonproliferation regime our governments built together beginning in the 1960s than we anticipated then. But as I noted earlier, there are two serious challenges worth highlighting. The first, of course, is the DPRK. The second – at least potentially, and on a longer timetable, if it unwisely proceeds to build a large fissile material production capacity that would prepare it for sudden “breakout” and a resumption of the nuclear weapons work it suspended in 2003 – is Iran.

The DPRK and Iran do indeed present us all with serious challenges. But please also remember the history I have just recounted – and the dire predictions of some of my own country’s intelligence analysts all those years ago. On the whole, it is clear, the nonproliferation promise of the NPT has thus been fulfilled, not squandered. Nuclear war has been made significantly less likely than predicted. Geopolitical stability has on the whole been maintained. Nuclear safeguards have been preserved, and are even today being improved through adherence to the Additional Protocol. And both weapon states and non-weapon states alike have benefited in profound ways from the obligations created by the NPT’s Articles I and II – an interlocking latticework of nonproliferation commitments that protects the security of all States Party by providing assurances against nuclear weaponization by each country’s neighbors and rivals, and thus helps forestall the injection of destabilizing new nuclear dynamics into conflict-prone regions of the world.

Nor, of course, after the tensions and distrust of the Cold War abated in the late 1980s, did the United States and Russia fail to act to help live up to the disarmament vision articulated in the Preamble and Article VI of the NPT. Notwithstanding the return of great power rivalry in recent years, with the rise of revisionist Russian and Chinese policies putting pressure on their neighbors and seeking to readjust the post-Cold War international order in their favor, enormous disarmament progress has occurred. In February of this year, the United States and the Russian Federation met the central limits of the New START strategic arms control treaty. As a result, the nuclear arsenals of the two nuclear superpowers have been limited at levels not seen since the 1950s, and the U.S. stockpile is approximately 12 percent of its Cold War peak.

All of this, my friends, is something to be proud of indeed.

And that is hardly all. While the nonproliferation regime has been busy successfully defying so many of the pessimistic proliferation expectations of earlier analysts – including, as I have outlined, those in the U.S. Intelligence Community – we should remember that the regime has also proven quite good at

using nonproliferation as a foundation upon which to build a successful system for sharing nuclear benefits far and wide, thereby greatly contributing to the health, nourishment, comfort, and prosperity of all humankind.

The IAEA has been a focal point for this sharing, over the years providing billions of dollars in assistance to its Member States in the use of nuclear energy and applications of nuclear science and technology for development. Last year alone, these programs and their supporting infrastructure received over 200 million euros worth of assessed and voluntary contributions. I would welcome a comprehensive accounting from the IAEA of the resources it has devoted to these programs over the years. The United States has been by far the largest contributor to the Agency's efforts to promote peaceful nuclear activities through the Agency, including via voluntary funding mechanisms such as the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative, having contributed more than \$320 million in voluntary contributions since 2010, as well as through in-kind contributions through training and direct technical assistance to the IAEA and its Member States. The United States also has been the largest supplier of nuclear power globally.

The benefits of technical assistance programs are harder to quantify, but include lives saved through improved cancer treatment, healthier livestock through the eradication of rinderpest, increased crop yields from new crop strains and from better groundwater management, and countries better positioned to make responsible choices and investments in nuclear power programs. The list is long. In 2015 and 2016, 20 new nuclear reactors were connected to power grids around the world, generating approximately 20 gigawatts of electricity. These fruits of peaceful applications of nuclear energy, science, and technology are based on the foundation of confidence that only a strong nuclear nonproliferation regime can provide.

Confounding Dire Predictions and Ensuring Hope for the Future

And so, I submit, this survey of the long, half-century story arc of the NPT should provide us a renewed understanding of just how profoundly beneficial the global nonproliferation regime has been for all States Party. The arc of Time, the Gita's destroyer of all things, has turned out – so far, at least – to be the destroyer, most of all, of pessimistic certainties about how awful and massively proliferated the 21st Century world would be. It is our collective effort in support of this nonproliferation regime, and its cornerstone in the NPT, that has helped confound our fathers' and grandfathers' grim expectations of a catastrophically proliferated world.

Sixty-five years ago, the President of the United States stood before the United Nations General Assembly and spoke powerfully about the Janus-faced nature of nuclear technology in the new Atomic Age that had at that point still only recently dawned upon Mankind. As befits the age of nuclear confrontation that was then well underway between the alliance systems of the democratic capitalist West and the totalitarian tyranny of the Communist Empire, Dwight Eisenhower spoke of a danger shared by all in this new age of global, atomic rivalry. But he also spoke of hope – a hope that he said should be shared by all.

The United States’ purpose, he declared, “is to help us to move out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light, to find a way by which the minds of men, the hopes of men, the souls of men everywhere, can move forward towards peace and happiness and well-being.” He promised engagement with our great nuclear rival, the USSR, not just in order to explore ways to end the arms race, but also in order to help find peaceful opportunities for the peoples of the world to “develop their natural resources and to elevate their lot.”

To this end, President Eisenhower envisioned, and called for the creation of, a world in which nuclear technology, “this greatest of destructive forces[,] can be developed into a great boon, for the benefit of all mankind.” To this end, he proposed a new era of international cooperation “to devise methods whereby this fissionable material would be allocated to serve the peaceful pursuits of mankind. Experts would be mobilized to apply atomic energy to the needs of agriculture, medicine, and other peaceful activities. A special purpose would be to provide abundant electrical energy in the power-starved areas of the world,” and he promised U.S. support and contributions to this work.

One outgrowth of that famous “Atoms for Peace” speech in 1953, of course, was the International Atomic Energy Agency – which came into existence four years later, and functions to this day providing both technical cooperation in the nuclear arena and an indispensable and improving system of nuclear safeguards that helps reassure everyone that sharing the benefits of nuclear knowledge can be done in ways consistent with preventing proliferation. A more distant, though hardly less momentous, consequence of this initiative, however, was the folding together of Eisenhower’s great themes into the NPT itself.

Today, upon the Golden Anniversary of the Treaty’s opening for signature, the NPT – that instrument about the future of which the CIA expressed such pessimism in 1975 – has survived and, for all its faults and all the challenges it

currently faces, has succeeded. It has survived as the cornerstone of a global regime to control the instabilities and the potential for catastrophe that have always been inherent in the spread of nuclear knowledge and has provided a bulwark against nuclear weapons proliferation that continues to provide every State Party with profound security benefits.

The global nonproliferation regime has not prevented all proliferation, of course. Happily, however, as our brief historical exploration has indicated, the regime has so far been able to confound the experts' dire predictions of "snowballing" proliferation. And it has done so while simultaneously providing a foundation upon which to build a global system for peaceful nuclear cooperation and development – an example of how nonproliferation can enrich the lives of everyone by permitting the sharing the myriad scientific, economic, and other benefits of the atomic age.

And that, I submit, is the real lesson we should draw today, upon this Golden Anniversary of the NPT's opening for signature. If we can stop our quarrelling and diplomatic remonstrations long enough to remember these successes, and the benefits the Treaty has brought to weapon states and non-weapon states alike, I firmly believe we can find ways to work together that will help this regime overcome its current challenges and continue to provide all of us such benefits for another half century – and beyond.

Thank you.