

Statement by the United States in Cluster 2: Regional Issues

**Third 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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Mr. Chairman,

As we look forward to the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty next year, we should remain mindful of the significant nuclear proliferation challenges that continue to threaten our collective security and the core benefits we all derive from the Treaty.

Foremost among these are North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and related programs, which pose grave threats to international security and the global nonproliferation regime. We continue to make steady diplomatic progress, including earlier this year at the Hanoi Summit. While the two sides did not reach agreement, we exchanged detailed positions and narrowed the gap on a number of issues.

We are prepared to make, and remain committed to making, progress—in parallel and simultaneously—on transforming the U.S.-DPRK relationship, establishing a lasting and stable peace on the Korean Peninsula, ensuring the DPRK follows through on its commitment to final, fully-verified denuclearization, and remains recovery efforts to heal the wounds of the Korean War.

All NPT Parties should recognize the important role of sanctions implementation and pressure. We continue to call upon all States to fully implement their obligations under relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in order to give the diplomatic track the greatest chance of success.

Mr. Chairman,

Iran also continues to pose a serious proliferation challenge. We have been clear why we ended U.S. participation in the JCPOA. Going forward, we are committed to working with our partners to bring maximum pressure on Iran in order to achieve a new deal that comprehensively addresses the totality of threats posed by Iran – including its destabilizing regional activities, its development and proliferation of ballistic missiles, and its nuclear program. In return, we are offering Iran the possibility of a full normalization of relations with the international community.

To achieve that goal though, Iran must be willing to change its behavior and take lasting steps that demonstrate that its nuclear program is and will forever remain exclusively peaceful. Iran must fully address why it retained an immense archive of files from its past nuclear weapons program, and provide an accurate accounting of its past nuclear weapons work.

Given Iran's long history of noncompliance, thorough IAEA verification in Iran is essential. We call on all NPT Parties to help share the burden in supporting the IAEA's critical role in verifying and monitoring Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related obligations and commitments. Iran must fully cooperate with the IAEA to address any credible concerns of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran, including by providing access to any location requested by the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

Nearly eight years have passed since the IAEA Board of Governors found Syria in noncompliance with its safeguards agreement for the construction of an undeclared plutonium production reactor with North Korean assistance. Since that time, Syria has refused to cooperate with the IAEA's investigation. Syria's longstanding safeguards noncompliance also constitutes noncompliance with Article III the Treaty, and should be a matter of urgent concern for all Parties. We urge all NPT Parties to speak with one voice and join us in calling on Syria to cooperate with the IAEA without further delay. We encourage all Parties to join us in co-sponsoring the joint statement we have circulated on this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States continues to support the goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, alongside a comprehensive and durable regional peace, and we are committed to supporting the regional states as they pursue direct, inclusive dialogue aimed at building trust and addressing the political and security obstacles that have impeded progress. We remain convinced that such efforts must be pursued voluntarily on the basis of arrangements mutually agreed upon by all the regional states, consistent with international practice.

We regret the UN General Assembly's decision last October – in a divided vote – to convene a conference on such a zone despite the absence of consensus support among the regional states. We fear that the sponsors of this decision have only set back prospects for inclusive regional dialogue toward the goals we share, and all Parties should hold them true to their word that they will not also set back our efforts at next year's Review Conference. In the absence of participation by all regional states, the United States will not attend the conference.

We continue to believe that a more productive way ahead would be for regional states to discuss practical steps that could build trust and promote an environment conducive to such a zone. We provided U.S. views in this regard in a working paper at the 2018 PrepCom.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain concerned by the growth of nuclear stockpiles and capabilities in Asia by NPT and non-NPT Parties, and continue to encourage all states with nuclear weapons to exercise restraint regarding their own nuclear and missile capabilities, and to support efforts to prevent the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We continue to encourage all states that have not yet done so to declare and maintain moratoria on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. The United States continues to support the long-term goal of NPT universality, and we remain fully committed to efforts to strengthen and uphold the Treaty.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.