

The Road from Prague: Arms Control Progress and Prospects

Remarks by:

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Thank you for your kind words.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Parliament,(to be adjusted to include other officials, if any are present) and friends,

I am honored that you have asked me to speak to you this morning and especially so in this magnificent and historic hall.

Your secretary general has asked me to speak about the United States arms control and non-proliferation agenda, which is not only the subject that I work on every day but an agenda to which I feel personally committed. Thus, I welcome the opportunity to discuss my government's initiatives in this area and the prospects for further progress on an agenda that we consider to be of such importance for all nations.

As you know, the Obama Administration is committed to reducing nuclear dangers and pursuing the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, while simultaneously protecting U.S. and allied security interests.

The President set out the near-term goals in his speech in 2009 in Prague; three of which have been accomplished in the past year.

The first – the President's commitment to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy- was accomplished through the completion in April of our Nuclear Posture Review. This review constitutes a clear break from past reviews, both in terms of process and scope.

The Department of Defense led the review, but for the first time policy-makers from other parts of the government fully participated in discussing the issues and making recommendations to the President. This NPR, also a first, was released publicly as an unclassified document and took a broad, whole of government approach to addressing U.S. nuclear policy and identifying concrete steps to enhance our national security.

A fundamental conclusion of the NPR was that today's most pressing nuclear threats come from terrorists and additional countries seeking nuclear weapons, not from the risk of large-scale nuclear attack as we thought during the Cold War. The recommendations of the Nuclear Posture Review reflect this reality.

The aim is to keep us secure in an uncertain world with continuing and evolving security challenges. To accomplish this, our specific objectives include preserving the effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent for as long as it is required, reducing the potential for conflict, enhancing strategic stability worldwide, and strengthening the nonproliferation regime. The NPR outlines a new strategy to ensure that our defenses and our diplomacy are pointed toward those objectives.

An important facet of our NPR from the perspective of our discussion today is the updating of our Negative Security Assurance (NSA) which will advance the President's objective of reducing the roles and numbers of nuclear weapons by

making it clear that the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapons states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations. The purpose of this change is to emphasize to non-nuclear states the security benefits of adhering to and fully complying with the NPT and their nuclear nonproliferation obligations.

Some have suggested this might lead such states to be less fearful of the consequences of using chemical and biological weapons. Nothing could be further from the truth. No one should doubt the resolve and conventional military capabilities of the United States to respond to such aggression with devastating effect and to hold accountable those responsible.

Nuclear proliferation and terrorism are global challenges, and they demand a global response. In Prague, President Obama also announced a new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years. He began by inviting world leaders from 46 other countries to Washington last April for a Nuclear Security Summit to seek commitments from all nations – especially those that enjoy the benefits of civilian nuclear power – to take steps to secure vulnerable nuclear materials and prevent nuclear smuggling in order to stop terrorists or criminal organizations from acquiring these dangerous materials.

The third accomplishment was the signing of the New START Treaty with Russia. The New START Treaty will improve U.S. and international security by: reducing and limiting U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear forces; promoting strategic stability by ensuring transparency and predictability regarding U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear forces over the life of the Treaty; and, advancing our nuclear nonproliferation agenda.

I was honored to serve as Deputy Head of Delegation during the year-long negotiation of the New START Treaty. Just over a month after its signing, the White House transmitted the Treaty to the United States Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. On September 16, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommended in a bipartisan vote that the full Senate provide its advice and consent to U.S. ratification of the New START Treaty. The Administration seeks this vote before the end of the year.

The New START Treaty is a continuation of the international arms control and nonproliferation framework that the United States and the Soviet Union, later the Russian Federation, have worked hard to foster and strengthen for the last 50 years.

The United States and Russia control more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. When the New START Treaty is fully implemented, it will result in the lowest number of deployed nuclear warheads since the 1950s.

The Treaty will limit deployed strategic warheads to 1,550 per side, which is about 30% below the maximum of 2,200 warheads permitted by the Moscow Treaty.

There will be a limit of 800 on the total number of deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and nuclear capable heavy bombers.

The Treaty has a separate limit of 700 on deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed nuclear capable heavy bombers. This limit is less than half the 1991 START Treaty limit of 1,600 deployed strategic delivery vehicles.

The Defense Department validated these numbers through rigorous analysis in the early months of the Nuclear Posture Review. Under the new Treaty, the United States will continue to maintain a safe, secure, and effective strategic nuclear force to protect ourselves and our allies and partners.

Moreover, the Treaty gives our military the flexibility to structure, deploy and maintain our remaining strategic nuclear forces in ways that best meet U.S. national security interests.

The Treaty imposes no constraints on our missile defense programs and plans, and the United States remains committed to deploying the most effective missile defenses possible to defend the homeland, our troops, our allies, and partners against the threat posed by ballistic missiles.

The Treaty's verification regime will provide each side confidence that the other is upholding its obligations, while also being simpler and less costly to implement than the original START. This is possible due to improved U.S.-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War, and because the Treaty builds on the knowledge of each other's nuclear forces and practices gained from our long experience with implementing the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), the START Treaty, and the Moscow Treaty.

The verification regime is based on an extensive set of data exchanges and timely notifications regarding all strategic offensive arms and facilities covered by the Treaty, on-site inspections, exhibitions, restrictions on where specified items may be located, and additional transparency measures.

New START provides for the resumption of vital on-site inspections of Russian strategic nuclear facilities and vice versa. Since START went out of force in December 2009 the United States and Russia have been unable, for the first time in more than 20 years, to conduct nuclear arms inspections in each other's country.

There is no substitute for such on-site inspections. They provide “boots on the ground” presence to confirm each other’s data declarations, and they add to each side’s knowledge of and confidence regarding the other’s strategic nuclear forces and practices. The Treaty and its verification provisions provide predictability and thus help lessen the risks of miscalculation and misunderstanding and reduce the pressure for each side to engage in build-ups based on worst-case analysis.

The new treaty also sets the stage for engaging other nuclear powers in fulfilling the goals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and expanding opportunities for enhancing strategic stability.

As stated in the preamble to the Treaty, it will provide new impetus to the step-by-step process of reducing and limiting nuclear arms with a view to expanding this process in the future to a multilateral approach.

These milestones – the completion and release of the NPR, the Nuclear Security Summit, and the signing of the New START Treaty – were followed closely by the successful Review Conference of the NPT in May, which, for the first time in ten years reached consensus agreement on a Final Document.

The three Action Plans agreed by consensus cover the Treaty's three essential pillars: nonproliferation, disarmament, and ensuring access to the peaceful benefits of nuclear power. With these Action Plans, the international community has an agreed course for strengthening the viability of this vital Treaty. The Action Plans bear witness to the essential truth that nuclear disarmament will not be realized without stronger barriers to proliferation, and consequences for violating those barriers. Likewise, states may be reluctant to join in strengthening barriers to proliferation if we fail to continue to make progress in reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons, or if we are seen to be attempting to restrict developing nations from access to the benefits of nuclear power. This is why my government views the outcome of this last Review Conference with such optimism for the future. It shows what the nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states can achieve when we put our minds together to achieve a shared goal.

Regrettably, one area in which there has been no progress is in the Conference on Disarmament, where there is continued deadlock over a program of work that would launch negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), as well as substantive discussion of other disarmament topics. In his 2009 Prague speech, President Obama talked about the importance of limiting the production of fissile material for weapons. We regard the blockage that has developed in the CD

as unwarranted and out of step with the expectations of the wide majority of states who are CD members.

If we are serious about realizing a world without nuclear weapons, then we must start now by working on a treaty to end the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. While it is true that four of the five nuclear weapons states have long-standing moratoria on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, as we all know, there are states with nuclear arsenals that have not declared or are not abiding by such a moratorium. And indeed, on an issue as vital as this, moratoria are no substitute for a verifiable and legally binding commitment.

Let me now turn to where we want to go in the future. First, we must bring the New START Treaty into force. Then, as President Obama said when he signed the Treaty, the United States will seek to include reductions in U.S. and Russian non-strategic and non-deployed nuclear weapons in future discussions. We hope that NATO will work with us to encourage greater transparency with Russia on nuclear issues.

As Secretary Clinton said in Tallinn, our aim should be to seek Russian agreement to increase transparency on non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, to relocate these weapons away from the territory of NATO members, and to include non-strategic nuclear weapons in the next round of U.S.-Russian arms control discussions alongside strategic and non-deployed nuclear weapons.

Building on this year's review conference, and to strengthen the non-proliferation treaty, we should embrace several principles. We need more resources and authority to strengthen international inspections. We need real and immediate consequences for countries caught breaking the rules or trying to leave the treaty without cause. And we should build a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation, including an international fuel bank, so that countries can access peaceful power without increasing the risks of proliferation.

And, of course, we need to move forward on the negotiation of a fissile material control treaty.

You will recall that, at this May's NPT Review Conference, Secretary Clinton reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to ratify the CTBT. Ratification of this treaty represents an essential step on the path toward a world without nuclear weapons. We believe that the United States, and all states, will be safer when the test ban enters into force.

While the Administration prepares for U.S. Senate reconsideration of the Treaty, the United States has increased its level of participation in all of the activities of the CTBTO's Preparatory Commission, especially with respect to the Treaty's verification regime. The United States has also assumed full responsibility for the costs of operating, maintaining, and sustaining the 31 stations

of the International Monitoring System assigned by the Treaty to the United States. These actions demonstrate the commitment of the United States to prepare for the entry into force of this Treaty.

A word about the Chemical Weapons Convention. The United States welcomes progress under the Chemical Weapons Convention, or CWC. We intend to build on that success and work with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), under the new Director General Ahmet Uzumcu of Turkey. U.S. priorities include the complete and verifiable destruction of our own chemical weapons stockpile, universal adherence and implementation, maintaining an effective verification regime, encouraging compliance with the Convention, and identifying how best to address new and emerging chemical weapons challenges that derive from advances in science and technology.

With regard to the Biological Weapons Convention, the Obama Administration is committed to the BWC, a commitment reinforced last December, when Under Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher spoke before the Annual Meeting of States Parties to the BWC in Geneva. She introduced the U.S. National Strategy for Countering Biological Threats, aimed at preventing biological weapons proliferation and terrorism and emphasized the critical role of the BWC in these efforts. Our strategy for countering biological threats rests upon the main principle of the BWC: that the use of biological weapons is “repugnant to the conscience of

mankind.” Our approach seeks to protect against the misuse of science to develop or use biological agents to cause harm by building global capacity to combat infectious disease, regardless of origin, preventing bioterrorism, and promoting confidence in effective BWC implementation and compliance.

In pursuing this approach, the United States, together with other States Party, would like to identify more effective ways to increase transparency, improve confidence-building measures, and engage in more robust bilateral compliance discussions.

Along with our international partners, the United States is pursuing diplomatic efforts to convince Iran and North Korea to resolve the world community’s concerns about their nuclear programs and to encourage them to cooperate in addressing all outstanding questions about those programs. We are working to build international consensus for steps that will convince Iran's leaders to change course, including new UN Security Council sanctions that will further clarify their choice of upholding their NPT and safeguards obligations or facing increasing isolation and painful consequences. With respect to North Korea, we continue to send the message that simply returning to the negotiating table is not enough. Pyongyang must move toward complete and verifiable denuclearization through irreversible steps, if it wants a normalized, sanctions-free relationship with the United States.

These steps send a clear message about this Administration's priorities and resolve. Our commitment to defend our national security interests and those of our allies and partners in Europe and elsewhere has never been stronger. In this regard, the NPR emphasizes close co-operation with our allies around the world and maintains our firm commitment to mutual security. We will work with our partners to reinforce regional security architectures, such as missile defenses, and other conventional military capabilities. And, I would like to repeat what the President has said: the United States will continue to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent for ourselves and our allies so long as these weapons exist anywhere in the world.

An important prerequisite for moving forward in arms control is the development of verification methods and technologies capable of detecting violations of arms control regimes and commitments to which we are, or might be party to in the future.

At the recent High Level Meeting in New York, France announced that it would host a meeting of the P-5. This meeting will continue a process begun by the United Kingdom with the first P5 meeting on verification and confidence building measures in September 2009. We are pleased by the French offer to host this next meeting. This process is not only tangible evidence of the P5's commitment to engage on disarmament issues, it can serve very real, practical

dividends in examining the issues related to verification and confidence-building that must be addressed if we are to achieve our shared goal of a nuclear-free world.

One final observation: In order to manage risk as we continue to reduce nuclear arsenals, we need to work together to establish effective, internationally-supported mechanisms for addressing noncompliance and inducing a return to compliance; and, together with our other international partners, work to resolve regional disputes that could motivate rival states to acquire and maintain nuclear weapons.

I have talked quite a bit, but this is a broad subject and I wanted to cover some very important accomplishments, areas that need more attention, and activities we aim to undertake in the future.

Thank you very much for your attention and I will do my best to answer your questions.