

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE

April 2 - 8, 2015

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1. A Strong NPT Treaty: Our Best Hope for a World without Nuclear Weapons
(04-07-2015)

Flags Of Member Nations Fly Outside The General Assembly Building At The United Nations Headquarters in New York

Later this month, the international community will gather in New York to review the workings of the now-45-year-old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Since its entry into force in 1970, the NPT has become the cornerstone of the nuclear nonproliferation regime to which nearly every country in the world has subscribed.

The NPT is built on three mutually reinforcing pillars -- nonproliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. States that do not possess nuclear weapons commit to forego them, those that do will work in good faith towards disarmament and all responsible stakeholders have the right to pursue peaceful nuclear programs.

All countries have a vested interest in strengthening [the treaty's three pillars](#): We all share the responsibility to confront nuclear proliferation and ensure nuclear weapons do not end up in the hands of terrorists; we all benefit from positive movement toward disarmament; and we all gain from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The NPT remains an essential foundation for international efforts to confront nuclear dangers and seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, the vision President Obama laid out [in his 2009 Prague speech](#).

If we didn't already have the NPT, we would desperately need it today.

At the Review Conference in New York, diplomacy will take center stage. The United States is committed to working with all parties toward realistic, achievable objectives to strengthen the NPT and ensure a successful review conference, even as we deal with the challenges from the few countries that have violated their nuclear obligations.

The United States is committed to [strengthening the nonproliferation regime](#) and the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency to implement nuclear safeguards -- a set of measures to verify that nuclear materials are used for peaceful purposes. The Treaty provides the foundation and context to resolve outstanding challenges to the nuclear nonproliferation regime. The ongoing negotiations with Iran provide the best diplomatic path forward for Iran to return to full compliance with the NPT.

The IAEA instills confidence among all NPT parties that a state's civil nuclear energy is not being diverted into a nefarious weapons program. In New York, the United States will promote the IAEA Additional Protocol, now recognized as the foremost international standard for safeguards that provides the IAEA with the authority to ensure that all nuclear material is used for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the NPT.

The United States likewise remains steadfast in [our commitment to disarmament](#) in accordance with the NPT. In a demonstration of good faith and transparency, we disclosed publicly details on our nuclear weapon stockpiles, [which have shrunk dramatically and continue to dwindle](#). Today, the U.S. stockpile stands at about 15 percent of what it was at the height of the Cold War. When scheduled reductions under the New START Treaty are completed by 2018, U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons will be at levels not seen since the 1950s.

Future steps in disarmament will pose significant verification challenges, but the United States seeks to lead efforts to overcome those challenges and lay the groundwork for future disarmament. Two weeks ago the United States hosted the kick-off meeting of [the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification](#) in Washington, D.C., which brought together representatives from 26 countries to address these technical verification issues to further reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons. In the same spirit of transparency, just a few days ago our national labs in New Mexico hosted a group of nuclear experts and officials from more than a dozen countries to demonstrate first-hand the work the United States is doing on disarmament and verification.

Peaceful applications of the atom promote global development in such areas as human health, food and agriculture, water resource management and the environment. The [United States' record on sharing the atom's peaceful benefits](#) speaks for itself. Since 2010, we have been the largest contributor to IAEA peaceful use programs, providing more than \$190 million, including \$50 million toward the IAEA's Peaceful Uses Initiative, since the last NPT Review Conference in 2010. We have also concluded civil nuclear cooperation agreements with 46 nations, Taiwan and the IAEA and continue to pursue agreements with additional partners.

Over the span of four decades, the NPT has provided an international legal basis for pragmatic cooperation to protect the world from nuclear dangers, even as we expand the peaceful benefits of nuclear energy. With nearly every country having joined the NPT, it is an essential contributor to international peace and security. We welcome all who are convening in New York, and look forward to carrying on the essential work of the NPT together.

About the Author: **Ambassador Adam Scheinman** is the President's Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation. For more information on the NPT, visit www.state.gov/npt or follow Ambassador Scheinman on [Twitter @USNPT](https://twitter.com/USNPT).

2. Ambassador Power on Situation in Yarmouk, Syria (04-07-2015)

Statement by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Situation in Yarmouk, April 7, 2015

The United States strongly condemns ISIL's advance on the besieged Palestinian community in Yarmouk, southern Damascus. Since entering Yarmouk on April 1, ISIL – reportedly with the support of the al Qaeda-affiliated al-Nusra Front – has violently clashed with other armed groups and the Syrian regime, putting the remaining 18,000 civilians in the area at severe risk.

It is critical that all parties to this conflict protect civilians in Yarmouk and allow regular, uninterrupted humanitarian access to Yarmouk's beleaguered population. Those living inside Yarmouk have already suffered from the regime's violence and have lived under regime siege for nearly two years, deprived of desperately needed essentials, including food, potable water, and medical relief. Bombardment by the Syrian regime now creates an even more desperate situation, as ISIL reportedly controls Yarmouk's only functioning medical facilities.

All parties must lift their siege of Yarmouk and allow for the safe evacuation of civilians in compliance with international law. Civilians who manage to leave Yarmouk must be granted immediate and safe passage; families must not be separated; and departing civilians must not be detained.

While ISIL's advances pose an added, acute danger to Yarmouk's civilians, all besieged communities in Syria are enduring horrific hardship. More than 440,000 people are encircled in 12 separate locations across Syria. The terrible toll the war has taken on Syria's civilians underscores the urgent need for a political solution to end the devastating conflict. It also highlights the profound need for the perpetrators of sieges and other atrocities against the civilian population to be held accountable.

Related Articles:

[Coalition Airstrikes Continue in Syria, Iraq](#)

[State Dept. on Violence Against Syrian Civilians](#)

[Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, Kuwait City, Kuwait](#)

[Why You Should Still Care About Syria | DipNote](#)

[U.S. Humanitarian Assistance in Response to the Syrian Crisis | Fact Sheet](#)

3. Carter Discusses U.S. Rebalance to Asia-Pacific Region (04-06-2015)

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, April 6, 2015 – U.S. re-emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region makes sense regionally and globally, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said at Arizona State University today.

The secretary spoke at the John McCain Institute in Tempe, Arizona, as the first part of a trip that takes him to Japan, South Korea and Hawaii.

The secretary's speech aimed to push for quick passage of the Trade Promotion Authority for President Barack Obama, "so that he can ensure America gets the best deal in a historic new trade agreement with eleven other Asia-Pacific countries: the Trans-Pacific Partnership."

Carter stressed that while the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region has a military component, it is a whole-of-government approach. Since World War II, the United States has underwritten security in the region. This has allowed nations like Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and China to develop and thrive.

Decades-old Alliances

America is a Pacific power and will remain one, Carter said, noting that the United States will continue to engage with nations in the Asia-Pacific region. Carter said his stops in Japan and South Korea highlight the importance of America's decades-old alliances with both countries.

But the United States is doing more, he added. The newest and most capable weapons systems will go first to the region. When movements are completed, he said, 60 percent of the U.S. fleet will be in the Pacific-Indian Ocean area. U.S. Marines already have a rotational presence in Australia, Carter said, and U.S. and Filipino authorities are working on ways to strengthen military-to-military cooperation.

To secure its enduring interests in the Asia-Pacific region, the United States is "changing, too, with our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific," Carter said.

The Asia-Pacific region is experiencing economic growth, and the United States must have access to those markets, the secretary said. He noted that more than half of the Earth's population will live in the region by 2050. Over the next 15 years, he added, there will be rapid middle-class growth across the Asia-Pacific, to the point that it will make up "60 percent of global middle-class consumption."

Democracies Increase in Asia-Pacific Region

The American presence has helped shape the region, said Carter, noting there's been a fourfold increase in the number of democracies in the region.

"Following our lead, countries across the Asia-Pacific have also embraced free and open commerce, fidelity to the rule of law, and a rules-based international order," the secretary said.

American strengths in security, economy and diplomacy "are multiplied by America's unrivaled network of allies and partners -- nations both in the region and around the world who seek our friendship, not because of our power alone or through coercion, but because of the gravitational pull of our ideals, values, and goodwill," Carter said. "These ties, tended to with careful diplomacy, are what make America's global strength so unique throughout history and today."

The secretary said he wants to expand the reach of these alliances and for America's allies in the Asia-Pacific region to do more together. Carter said the United States is working with Japan and South Korea to build an information-sharing arrangement, adding that the United States is working with Australia and Japan to strengthen maritime security.

And the United States is working with India, Carter said.

"In January, we agreed to an update of our bilateral Defense Framework -- the first update in 10 years," he said. "It will open up new ways to expand the U.S.-India relationship, such as on

maritime security, and new opportunities to cooperate on high-end technologies, for example, jet engines and aircraft carrier design.”

China’s Influence in the Asia-Pacific Region

Carter then discussed China’s influence in the Asia-Pacific.

“Some people would have you believe that China will displace America in the Asia-Pacific or that its economic growth will somehow squeeze out opportunities,” he said. “But I reject the zero-sum thinking that China’s gain is our loss because there is another scenario in which everyone wins -- and it is a continuation of the decades of peace and stability anchored by a strong American role, in which all Asia-Pacific countries continue to rise and prosper. This is the scenario we seek in the ongoing rebalance.”

Yet, many observers are concerned about the scope of China’s military modernization efforts, China’s actions in cyberspace, and Chinese behavior in the East and South China Seas, the secretary said.

“These are concerns we raise with our Chinese counterparts on a regular basis,” he said.

Carter then turned to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. “As secretary of defense, I never forget that our military strength ultimately rests on the foundation of our vibrant, unmatched and growing economy,” he said. “The Trans-Pacific Partnership is so important because of its enormous promise for jobs and growth across our nation’s economy. It is expected to increase U.S. exports by \$125 billion in the next decade, supporting high-quality jobs.”

While good for jobs, the partnership also makes strategic sense, the secretary said.

“In terms of our rebalance in the broadest sense, passing TPP is as important to me as another aircraft carrier,” Carter said. “TPP would deepen our alliances and partnerships abroad and underscore our lasting commitment to the Asia-Pacific. And it would help us promote a global order that reflects both our interests and our values.”

Biographies:

[Ash Carter](#)

Related Articles:

[Remarks on the Next Phase of the U.S. Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific](#)
[Statement on Secretary of Defense Ash Carter's Upcoming Travel to Asia](#)

Related Sites:

[Asia-Pacific Rebalance](#)

4. Obama’s Weekly Address on Iran’s Nuclear Program Deal (04-04-2015)

In his weekly address, President Obama describes the historic understanding the United States — with its allies and partners — reached with Iran, which, if fully implemented, will prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and will make the world safer. The deal, announced on April 2, meets the core objectives of cutting off every pathway that Iran could take to develop a nuclear weapon. It is both comprehensive and long-term, and includes robust and intrusive inspections of the country’s nuclear program. The president reiterates that the deal is not yet done — and if there is backsliding from Iran in the months to come, there will be no deal. He echoes his belief that a diplomatic

resolution is by far the best option and promises to continue to fully brief Congress and the American people on the substance and progress of the negotiations in the months to come.

The audio of the address and video of the address are available online at <http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=www.whitehouse.gov>.

Remarks of President Barack Obama **Weekly Address**

This week, together with our allies and partners, we reached an historic understanding with Iran, which, if fully implemented, will prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon and make our country, our allies, and our world safer.

This framework is the result of tough, principled diplomacy. It's a good deal—a deal that meets our core objectives, including strict limitations on Iran's program and cutting off every pathway that Iran could take to develop a nuclear weapon.

This deal denies Iran the plutonium necessary to build a bomb. It shuts down Iran's path to a bomb using enriched uranium. Iran has agreed that it will not stockpile the materials needed to build a weapon. Moreover, international inspectors will have unprecedented access to Iran's nuclear program because Iran will face more inspections than any other country in the world. If Iran cheats, the world will know it. If we see something suspicious, we will inspect it. So this deal is not based on trust, it's based on unprecedented verification.

And this is a long-term deal, with strict limits on Iran's program for more than a decade and unprecedented transparency measures that will last for 20 years or more. And as a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran will never be permitted to develop a nuclear weapon.

In return for Iran's actions, the international community, including the United States, has agreed to provide Iran with phased relief from certain sanctions. If Iran violates the deal, sanctions can be snapped back into place. Meanwhile, other American sanctions on Iran for its support of terrorism, its human rights abuses, its ballistic missile program, all will continue to be enforced.

As I said this week, many key details will need to be finalized over the next three months, and nothing is agreed to until everything is agreed. And if there is backsliding, there will be no deal.

Here in the United States, I expect a robust debate. We'll keep Congress and the American people fully briefed on the substance of the deal. As we engage in this debate, let's remember—we really only have three options for dealing with Iran's nuclear program: bombing Iran's nuclear facilities—which will only set its program back a few years—while starting another war in the Middle East; abandoning negotiations and hoping for the best with sanctions—even though that's always led to Iran making more progress in its nuclear program; or a robust and verifiable deal like this one that peacefully prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

As President and Commander in Chief, I firmly believe that the diplomatic option—a comprehensive, long-term deal like this—is by far the best option. For the United States. For our allies. And for the world.

Our work—this deal—is not yet done. Diplomacy is painstaking work. Success is not guaranteed. But today we have an historic opportunity to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in Iran, and to do so peacefully, with the international community firmly behind us. And this will be our work in the days and months ahead in keeping with the best traditions of American leadership.

Related Articles:

[Obama's Call with Mideast Leaders on Iran's Nuclear Program](#)

5. Kerry: Deal with Iran Is Critical, But More Work Ahead (04-03-2015)

This commentary by Secretary of State John Kerry was first published by the [Boston Globe](#).

A critical deal with Iran, but more work to be done

By John F. Kerry

On Thursday, the United States, Iran, and our negotiating partners from the U.N. Security Council and European Union agreed on the parameters of a plan that, if finalized and implemented, will prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Under the parameters, Iran would be required to reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent, and cut the number of installed centrifuges that are or could be used to enrich uranium by more than two-thirds. For at least the next 15 years, Iran would be limited to a single uranium enrichment facility and barred from enriching any uranium beyond a level that is adequate for civilian purposes but nowhere near sufficient to provide fuel for a nuclear weapon.

These restrictions will be enforced through a regime of regular and comprehensive international inspections — an arrangement that will detect any attempt to divert nuclear materials to a clandestine location or plant.

The result would be to increase Iran's breakout time — the time it would take for Iran to speed up its enrichment and produce enough fissile material for one nuclear weapon — to at least a year. That is as much as six times what it is today and what it has been for the past three years.

From the outset of these negotiations, President Obama has had a single purpose: to ensure that Iran does not build or acquire a nuclear weapon. Some have suggested that the only way to do that is to start yet another war in the Middle East. The president thought it wiser to explore the possibility of a diplomatic solution. His approach succeeded in gaining the international support needed to intensify economic pressure on the government in Tehran. And that approach has brought us to where we are today: with an opportunity for a comprehensive plan to block every pathway Iran might use to build a nuclear weapon.

Under the parameters we have negotiated, Iran's uranium enrichment facility at Fordow will be converted into a nuclear, physics, and technology center. Its heavy-water reactor in Arak will no longer be able to produce weapons-grade plutonium, and spent fuel from the reactor will be shipped out of the country. These steps, coupled with comprehensive inspections, will prevent Iran from openly or secretly using enriched uranium or plutonium to provide fuel for a nuclear bomb.

I have been involved in efforts to restrain Iran's nuclear program for many years. As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I made a quiet trip to Oman in 2011 to indicate to the government there that the Obama administration might be willing to open a dialogue on the nuclear issue. That visit to a key regional leader opened the door to direct bilateral talks and later to the formal multilateral negotiations we have witnessed in recent months. Now we have reached the next step, but we still have further to go. The parameters on which we have agreed must be transformed into text and some outstanding issues must still be resolved. The deadline for that is June 30 — after which will come the even more crucial stage of implementation. To be clear, there is no aspect of this agreement that is based on promises or trust; every element is subject to proof. Only if Iran lives up to its obligations, as verified by the IAEA and by our own eyes and ears, will it receive the relief from sanctions that it needs to end its economic isolation.

Throughout the negotiating process, we have consulted frequently with our allies and partners, including Israel and the Gulf states, and have vigorously reaffirmed our enduring commitment to their security. We remain deeply concerned about Iran's destabilizing actions in the region. But it is precisely because we are so concerned about these issues — and about the region's security — that we believe this deal is critical.

I know that some will suggest that the agreed parameters are not sufficient, but the burden will be on them to prescribe a specific and plausible alternative to a better outcome. The fact is that we have reached an important milestone in our years-long effort to ensure that Iran's nuclear program is and remains wholly peaceful. I hope we will concentrate now on the remaining steps to get this vital job done.

6. UN International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (04-03-2015)

Press Statement by John Kerry, Secretary of State, Washington, DC

The observance of UN International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on April 4 allows the United States to take pride in its efforts to address the humanitarian impact of these deadly devices on civilian populations around the world.

Nonetheless, landmines and other unexploded ordnance continue to endanger civilians in over 60 countries across the globe.

We must make that our focus during the coming year.

Since 1993, the United States has provided more than \$2.4 billion in assistance in over 90 countries for conventional weapons destruction programs. Thanks to strong bipartisan support in Congress, these funds provide the expertise and equipment to safely clear landmines and other unexploded ordnance. They also provide prosthetics and physical rehabilitation services, and vocational training for those injured by these weapons.

Just 15 years ago, landmines and unexploded ordnance were killing and injuring nearly 10,000 men, women, and children every year. In recent years, that figure has dropped by roughly 60 percent, and 15 countries — from Honduras to Tunisia to Rwanda — are free from the impact of landmines today due to the efforts of the United States and our international partners in government and civil society.

Our efforts to address the humanitarian impacts of landmines extend to our own weapons stockpiles as well.

Last September, President Obama brought us one step closer to the goal of a world free from anti-personnel landmines when he announced that the United States will no longer use anti-personnel landmines outside of the unique circumstances of the Korean Peninsula.

The President also said the United States will begin destroying its anti-personnel landmine stockpiles not required for the defense of the Republic of Korea. And we continue our efforts to pursue solutions that may ultimately allow us to accede to the Ottawa Convention — the international treaty that prohibits the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

These steps reflect America's continued commitment to a powerful global humanitarian movement that has helped prevent the loss of innocent lives. But this work is far from finished.

Decades after soldiers have laid down their weapons and leaders have made peace, landmines and other unexploded ordnance continue to kill and maim the innocent, keep farmers from their fields, and prevent goods from getting to market. Meanwhile, indiscriminate use of landmines and other explosive weapons continues worldwide.

We will continue our effort to help countries clear a path to a future in which all can walk the earth in safety.

Related Articles:

[Clearing Landmines, Saving Lives](#)

[U.S. Global Leadership in Landmine Clearance and Conventional Weapons Destruction](#)

Related Sites:

[Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement](#) (WRA)

[7. Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty \(04-01-2015\)](#)

Overview

The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of the nonproliferation regime. It entered into force in 1970, and 190 states have subscribed. The treaty covers three mutually reinforcing pillars—disarmament, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy—and is the basis for international cooperation on stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. The basic bargain at the core of the NPT is sound: Countries with nuclear weapons will move towards disarmament; countries without nuclear weapons will not acquire them; and all countries can access peaceful nuclear technology.

What is the Nonproliferation Treaty?

Apr. 1: Message from Adam Scheinman, Special Representative for Nuclear Non-Proliferation [Full Text](#)

The NPT Review Process

The Treaty allows for the Parties to gather every five years to review its operation. At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the Parties extended the Treaty indefinitely and formalized the practice of convening a Review Conference (RevCon) every five years, as well as holding Preparatory Committee meeting during each of the three years preceding a RevCon. The 2015 NPT RevCon will take place at the United Nations in New York from April 27-May 22. The U.S. looks forward to a constructive RevCon, and we pledge to work with others to reaffirm and strengthen the NPT as a critical element of our common security.

Key NPT Remarks and Documents

- [Joint Statement from the Nuclear-Weapon States at the London P5 Conference](#)
- [U.S. National Report 2014](#) (an updated report for 2015 will be posted at the start of the RevCon).
- [Under Secretary Gottemoeller: The Vision of Prague Endures](#)
- [2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Final Document](#)

April 8, 2015

Contact Us: [Ambassador Adam Scheinman](#) is President Obama's Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation, and together with offices in ISN and AVC, he leads U.S. efforts in support of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Questions and media inquiries should be directed to Sandra Postell at Postellsr@state.gov.
