

Remarks at the 2015 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference
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As Prepared for Delivery

Madam President,

The United States has a deep and long standing interest in global nonproliferation efforts. President Obama remains committed to pursuing the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. We remain unwavering in our support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and believe that this Review Conference (RevCon) has demonstrated the broad international support for the Treaty and the critical role it plays in global security. Though this conference concludes today, it is clear that the NPT remains the enduring cornerstone for the global nonproliferation regime and will continue to serve as the focus for our efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

As a result of our sustained leadership, engagement, and flexibility in New York, we have made real progress the past four weeks in advancing the discussion on global nonproliferation policy, disarmament, and peaceful uses. Much of this is reflected in the draft final document tabled by the President of the Conference.

Throughout this Conference, we reaffirmed the central role of the NPT in international security and the importance of compliance, developed ideas on enhancing the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency, universalizing the Additional Protocol, increasing transparency among nuclear weapons states, further promoting disarmament education, fostering international collaboration in developing nuclear disarmament verification capabilities, bolstering contributions to the Peaceful Uses Initiative and working to develop methods to handle withdrawal from the Treaty.

Moreover, we acknowledged the sincere and shared concern of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. It is precisely our understanding of the consequences of nuclear weapons use that drives our efforts to reduce - and eventually eliminate - nuclear weapons, and to extend forever the nearly 70 year record of non-use of nuclear weapons. Lasting nuclear disarmament will only be achieved through a sustained, collaborative effort to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.

Madame President,

We have made clear throughout the process that we will not accept the efforts by some to cynically manipulate the RevCon to try and leverage the negotiation to advance their narrow objectives at the expense of the treaty or of our shared long-standing principles. We know that this Treaty is more important than one idea or one person or one country. We also made clear that we were prepared to conclude this conference without a final consensus document rather

than endorse a bad final document, just as we have said about other matters in the international arena.

We were prepared to endorse consensus on all the other parts of the draft Final Document addressing the three pillars of the Treaty – disarmament, nonproliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Unfortunately, the language related to the convening of a regional conference to discuss issues relevant to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is incompatible with our long-standing policies.

We have long supported regional nuclear weapons-free zones, as these zones, when properly crafted and fully implemented, can contribute to international peace, security and stability. We have also stressed that the initiative for the creation of such zones should emanate from the regions themselves, and under a process freely arrived at and with the full mutual consent of all the states in the region.

Secretary Kerry noted at the opening of the Review Conference that we were firmly committed to holding the proposed conference on a regional zone in the Middle East, free of all weapons of mass destruction, provided that the terms for the conference would be agreed to by all regional states. Secretary Kerry also warned that there would be no prospect for engagement or agreement absent the consent of all the states involved.

Unfortunately the proposed language for a final document did not allow for consensus discussions among the countries of the Middle East for an agreement on the agenda and the modalities of the conference and set an arbitrary deadline for holding the conference. We attempted to work with other delegations—in particular, Egypt and other Arab League states—to improve the text; but a number of these states, and in particular Egypt, were not willing to let go of these unrealistic and unworkable conditions included in the draft text. In the end, the proposed final document outlined a process that would not build the foundation of trust necessary for holding a productive conference that could reflect the concerns of all regional states.

The United States is also disappointed that the failure to show flexibility leaves us with no clearly defined path to convene a conference on the Middle East free zone. All the productive efforts to date, including the historic face-to-face consultations on regional security issues that occurred in Gliben, do not need to be abandoned, however. If all the states in the region show the political will to resume the process of building such a zone through consensus, direct dialogue and a broad-based agenda, the United States stands ready to be their strongest supporter.

Madam President,

We regret that we were not able to support the draft consensus document tabled by the President of the conference. The blame for the inability of this conference to produce a forward-looking consensus document, however, lies squarely with those states that were unable to show any

flexibility in pursuit of the convening of a Middle East conference that enshrined the principles of consensus and equality.

In closing, Madam President, we appreciate the efforts of the vast majority of States Parties at this Review Conference, and in particular, your work and that of the Secretariat. While we regret that this Review Conference will not produce a final consensus document, we leave New York satisfied that the NPT will continue to serve as a fundamental norm undergirding all of our efforts to achieve international peace and security for all.

