

Statement by the United States

Cluster 2 – Specific Issue

**Regional Issues, including with respect to the Middle East and the
Implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East**

**First Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Delivered by Ambassador Adam Scheinman

Vienna

August 7, 2023

Chair,

The integrity and full realization of the Treaty demands that we address nonproliferation and compliance concerns openly and honestly.

The United States remains deeply concerned that, to date, Iran has failed to provide the cooperation required by its safeguards obligations under the Treaty. The burden is on Iran to resolve outstanding safeguards issues. It should do this by providing credible information necessary to clarify IAEA questions regarding potential undeclared nuclear material and activities. Iran's unilateral decision to terminate implementation of modified Code 3.1 is contrary to its legal obligations, reducing international confidence that all nuclear facilities under construction in Iran are declared. Iran's decision to end implementation of its Additional Protocol is also deeply troubling. Because of Iran's unsatisfactory cooperation, the IAEA remains unable to provide assurances regarding the

peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program, or that Iran has placed all nuclear material under safeguards as required by NPT Article III.

Further, Iran's production of highly enriched uranium and deployment of advanced centrifuges amplify these legitimate concerns. Iran's production of HEU up to 60% has no credible civilian purpose. If Iran's purpose was genuinely peaceful, we should expect it to take actions that build international confidence and de-escalate tensions, rather than engage in nuclear provocations that pose grave proliferation risks. I would note that the United States remains committed to diplomacy. It was Iran that rejected a swift return to full implementation of the JCPOA almost a year ago, demanding the closure of the IAEA's open safeguards investigations as part of the agreement. As we've made clear, the power to resolve these issues is in Iran's hands alone.

Chair,

The DPRK's unlawful and continuing nuclear and ballistic missile programs constitute a serious and direct threat to international peace and security and to the global nonproliferation regime. The DPRK's threatening and irresponsible rhetoric has also intensified, including by characterizing some of its missile launches and other military activities as "trial runs" for the use of tactical nuclear weapons. Our goal remains the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In that regard, the United States is committed to serious, calibrated, and sustained diplomacy with the DPRK, and we will continue to insist on its return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

We note that the DPRK also continues to advance unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs through sanctions evasion, violating multiple UN Security Council resolutions. We call upon all states parties to fully implement these resolutions, which is necessary for dialogue to play a role in reversing the DPRK's WMD and missile programs.

Concerning Syria, we reiterate that its construction of an undeclared plutonium production reactor at constitutes non-compliance with its NPT safeguards obligations. Syria's refusal to engage substantively with the IAEA – including on outstanding safeguards questions related to possible undeclared nuclear material or fuel cycle activities in Syria – prevents the Agency from providing assurance that Syria's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. Here too, the burden rests with the Syrian leadership to cooperate with the IAEA without further delay.

Chair,

The United States remains committed to the goal of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, based on arrangements freely arrived at by all regional states. We are convinced that the only path to progress is through direct, inclusive dialogue aimed at building confidence and addressing the legitimate security concerns of all parties. We are prepared to engage on initiatives to advance implementation of the 1995 Resolution that have consensus regional support. The United States took note of developments during the first three sessions of the UN Conference on the establishment of such a zone,

but we continue to question whether that UN Conference can serve as an effective forum for dialogue among all the regional states. We note that no other regional zone required a UN umbrella or architecture for negotiation, and we reject claims that the United States' decision not to participate as an observer in this Conference in any way constitutes hindering the implementation of the 1995 Resolution or backtracking on past U.S. commitments. I note that it was not the United States that ended regional consultations to prepare for the Middle East Zone conference called for in the 2010 Action Plan, consultations in which the Israel participated in at a senior level.

Finally, the United States remains concerned by the growth of nuclear weapons stockpiles and capabilities of NPT Parties and non-Parties in Asia, and we continue to encourage all states with nuclear weapons to exercise restraint regarding their nuclear weapons and missile capabilities, including by establishing and maintaining moratoria on production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Chair.