



REMARKS IN SUBSIDIARY BODY 4

By **U.S. MISSION GENEVA**

AUGUST 8, 2024

Remarks in Subsidiary Body 4: Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States Against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons

August 8, 2024

As Prepared

Chair, Coordinator,

The United States relies on nuclear weapons to deter strategic attacks and assure our allies and partners that they do not need nuclear weapons of their own to defend their vital interests. As articulated in the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review, the United States would consider the use of nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners.

As the NPR lays out, we conducted a thorough review of a broad range of options for a nuclear declaratory policy – including both No First Use and Sole Purpose policies – and concluded that those approaches would result in an unacceptable level of risk in light of the range of non-nuclear capabilities being developed and fielded by competitors that could inflict strategic-level damage on the United States and its allies and partners.

All that said, the United States understands and appreciates the desire for effective measures to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use of nuclear weapons. We have joined consensus calls for such measures in documents from the 1978 SSOD1 to NPT Review Conferences, we participated fully when this body was engaged in negotiations on this topic, and we support continued discussions on this matter.

There are a variety of such effective measures, some matters of national policy, some in the form of legally binding obligations. The United States has engaged in both categories of assurance.

Moreover, the United States maintains a negative security assurance (NSA) that it will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the NPT and are in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Said differently, the only states that do not fall under our NSA are those few that have nuclear weapons, that remain outside the NPT, or are not in compliance with their nonproliferation obligations.

We have long believed that the Protocols to the regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties (NWFZs) provide the most expeditious and practical way to extend legally binding negative security assurances. These treaties are a way for states to improve the security environment in their respective regions. They reinforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the global nonproliferation regime, advancing security and disarmament on a regional basis. The United States has signed relevant protocols to four such zone treaties, and is engaging with relevant member states with a view to overcoming obstacles to signature of a fifth. We also support an eventual zone in the Middle East, established on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among all states of the region.

From our perspective, between the global NSA contained in our NPR as a matter of U.S. policy and the corresponding legally-binding NSAs in nuclear weapon free zones, there is little need or utility in negotiating an additional legal instrument on this topic. That said, we have clearly heard that others prioritize this issue. In keeping with a balanced and comprehensive approach, we welcomed the establishment of this subsidiary body and hope its work can continue through 2025.

As we have stated before, the United States also remains ready to establish an ad hoc committee in the CD to negotiate on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapons states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them, in conjunction with commencing negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty.

We look forward to holding discussions in earnest throughout the coming year, and you can count on the United States to engage seriously, notwithstanding a number of difficult, complex questions that will almost certainly arise from the outset.

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