

**Statement by Ambassador Laura Kennedy**  
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**Disarmament**  
**Department of State**  
**United States of America**

**Cluster 1 Specific Issue: Nuclear Disarmament and Security Assurances**  
**First Session of the Preparatory Committee**  
**2015 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the**  
**Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**  
**May 4, 2012**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. The United States recognizes the importance of security assurances to states that have foresworn nuclear weapons and that abide by their nuclear nonproliferation obligations. I would like to summarize the U.S. commitment to providing such assurances.

The United States released our Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) in April 2010, after completing a comprehensive assessment of U.S. nuclear deterrence policy, strategy, and force posture. In the NPR, the United States strengthened our long-standing negative security assurance associated with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in several ways.

Specifically, the 2010 NPR declared that the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations. This revised assurance is intended to underscore the security benefits of adhering to and fully complying with the NPT.

In making this strengthened assurance, the 2010 NPR affirmed that any state eligible for the assurance that used chemical or biological weapons against the United States or our allies and partners would face the prospect of a devastating *conventional* military response.

Even for states not eligible for this assurance, the 2010 NPR made clear that the United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or our allies and partners. It is in the U.S. interest and that of all other nations that the more than 65-year record of nuclear non-use be extended forever.



Mr. Chairman, my delegation has taken note of the interest that has been expressed about the legal aspects of the use of nuclear weapons. We of course strongly agree that all states must "comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law," as stated in the 2010 Action Plan. A serious analysis of the legality of a hypothetical use of nuclear weapons would have to consider the precise circumstances of that use, and cannot be evaluated in the abstract.

Mr. Chairman, as noted in the 2010 NPR, the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security and U.S. military strategy has been reduced significantly in recent decades, but further steps can and should be taken. The fundamental role of U.S. nuclear weapons, which will continue as long as nuclear weapons exist, is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, our allies, and partners. We will work to establish conditions under which a universal policy that makes deterrence of nuclear attack the sole purpose of nuclear weapons could be safely adopted.

The strengthened U.S. negative security assurance announced in the 2010 NPR reinforces President Obama's objectives of reducing the roles and numbers of nuclear weapons. Recognizing that the United States can take further steps in this direction, the President has directed a comprehensive study of our nuclear forces. That study is underway.

Mr. Chairman, the United States also supports well-crafted nuclear-weapon-free zones that are vigorously enforced and developed in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are a party to both Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, one of which provides a legally-binding NSA. In recent years, the United States has worked toward extending the strengthened U.S. negative security assurance announced in the 2010 NPR by

pursuing ratification of protocols to a number of other nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. To this end, we submitted the protocols to the African and South Pacific treaties to the U.S. Senate last May, and we look forward to signing the protocol to the Southeast Asia treaty in the coming months. We look forward to consulting with the parties to the Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone in an effort to resolve issues that would allow us to sign the protocol to that treaty as well.

Mr. Chairman, we recognize that NPT states that forego nuclear weapons and are in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations have a legitimate interest in not being subject to nuclear threats or attacks. The strengthened U.S. negative security assurance announced in the 2010 NPR, together with our support of nuclear-weapon-free zones, demonstrates an enduring commitment on the part of the United States to providing such negative security assurances. At the same time, it underscores the security benefits of adhering to and fully complying with the NPT and affirming the responsibility we all share to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime.