

NPT's entry into force – 40th anniversary [UNIDIR, 10 March 2010, Geneva]

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quoted H.E. Ms Susan E. Rice's remarks in NY on 5 March 2010

Statement by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the 40th Anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, March 5, 2010

Today marks the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and now 189 countries are parties to this Treaty. On this day, we recall and reaffirm the NPT's core bargain: countries with nuclear weapons will move toward disarmament, countries without nuclear weapons will not acquire them, and all countries will be able to access peaceful nuclear energy under safeguards. The United States is taking concrete steps to strengthen all three pillars of the NPT — disarmament, nonproliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — with the vision and vigor manifest in President Obama's speech last year in Prague.

We look forward to the upcoming NPT Review Conference this May in New York, where we will recommit ourselves to reversing the spread of nuclear weapons and to building momentum for their eventual elimination. Since 1998, the United States has dismantled more than 13,000 warheads. By 2012, under current plans, the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile will be less than 25 percent of its 1991 total — its lowest level since the 1950s. The United States continues to work with the Russian government toward further mutual reductions in our nuclear arsenals. For the sake of our common security, we seek to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and we will continue to urge others to do the same.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons continues to pose one of the greatest threats to global security. Thus, the international nuclear nonproliferation regime must be strengthened to confront the evolving threats from terrorists and other nonstate actors with nuclear ambitions as well as the ongoing challenge of governments that flaunt their nuclear nonproliferation obligations. As President Obama noted in Prague, "In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up."

To uphold and reinforce the nonproliferation regime, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must have the resources and authority to fulfill its vital mission. The United States is committed to ensuring that the IAEA has both. We are working with all parties to strengthen the IAEA's safeguards system and to bolster the Treaty against those who might seek to reap its benefits and then withdraw from its responsibilities. In addition, we continue to press for a verified treaty to end the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons — and pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

To truly harness our potential for clean energy, invest in the technologies of tomorrow, end the world's dependence on fossil fuels, and responsibly meet growing global demand for energy, we will also work to fortify the third pillar of the NPT: the peaceful use of the atom in the interest of all humankind. We aim to build a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation, including an international fuel bank, so that countries can access peaceful nuclear power without increasing the risks of nuclear

proliferation. That must be the right of every nation that renounces nuclear weapons, especially developing countries embarking on peaceful nuclear programs to help expand the reach of prosperity.

In an era of transnational security threats, we have embarked upon a new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years — to pursue new partnerships to lock down sensitive materials and keep them beyond the reach of terrorists. At the same time, we are also working to reinforce the structure that can ensure that, when any state breaks the rules, it will face consequences.

On this important anniversary, let us applaud the foresight and determination that forty years ago helped create a safer world. Let us recall that generations past built a foundation that can let us move toward a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear terror. And let us renew our resolve, in the words of President Kennedy, to “bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.”