

Press Releases: Conclusion of UN Negotiations on a Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons

Press Statement
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Washington, DC
July 7, 2017

Negotiations on a treaty purporting to ban nuclear weapons concluded in New York on July 7. The United States did not participate in these negotiations and will not support the treaty. Over many years and under various Administrations, we have made clear our willingness to work together with all states to improve international security and reduce the risk of nuclear war. However, this proposed treaty – which ignores the current security challenges that make nuclear deterrence necessary – will not result in the elimination of a single nuclear weapon, nor will it enhance the security of any state. No state that possesses nuclear weapons participated in these negotiations, and no U.S. ally that relies on extended nuclear deterrence supported the final text.

The United States is fully committed to responsible nonproliferation and disarmament efforts and to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We remain on track to meet the central limits of the New START Treaty when they take effect in February 2018, which will cap U.S. and Russian nuclear forces at their lowest levels since the 1950s.

Nuclear disarmament cannot take place in a vacuum. It would require a transformation of the international security environment, consensus-based approaches that include states that possess nuclear weapons as well as those that do not, rigorous verification, and swift and sure enforcement against any potential violation. We call on all states to join us in intensifying our efforts to address the real security challenges the international community would need to overcome in order to make this possible, beginning with the threat to international peace and security presented by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs, its continuing provocations, and its disregard for numerous UN Security Council resolutions. The proposed treaty produced by the nuclear weapons ban negotiations fails in all of these respects, and will do nothing to advance real-world efforts to make the world

a safer place. At best it is a distraction from those efforts. At worst, it will deepen political divisions, undermine alliance relationships that help make the world more secure, and make it harder for the international community to work together in devising and implementing effective measures that will let us meet these challenges together.

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