



***U.S. Mission to the International Organizations,
Vienna, Austria***

June 13, 2016

Statement by the United States of America

As Delivered by

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Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Preparatory Commission's 20th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting

Vienna Austria

Minister Comănescu, Distinguished Ministers, Executive Secretary Zerbo, esteemed guests, ladies and gentleman, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I would like to thank you all for the heartfelt expressions of sympathy for the terrible event that happened in Orlando this past weekend.

As President Obama said, "This was an act of terror and an act of hate. As Americans, we are united in grief, in outrage, and in resolve to defend our own people."

It was indeed a great tragedy for the United States and the entire world.

I am honored to be here representing the United States of America, as we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

I would like to begin by reading a statement from President Barack Obama:

I send greetings to all those commemorating the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and I am pleased to recognize the important contributions of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization over the past two decades.

Since the United States signed the CTBT in 1996, we have strengthened the nuclear nonproliferation regime and enhanced the security of our world. Though we have made great progress, the Treaty's full potential has not been fulfilled. We must remain steadfast in our support for the Treaty and for the critical work of the Preparatory Commission.

I am proud of the role the United States has played in negotiating this Treaty, and our continued support for the work of the PrepCom and its Provisional technical Secretariat to prepare for the effective implementation of the treaty. I commend your countries' continued contributions to this cause and urge all members of the PrepCom to make available the political, technical, and financial resources necessary to complete the Treaty's Verification regime.

A legally-binding prohibition on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions is a meaningful step toward nuclear disarmament – a goal achievable once the CTBT enters into force. I wish you all the best for a successful Ministerial Meeting. (End of President Obama's Statement)

Ladies and Gentlemen, 53 years and 3 days ago, President John F. Kennedy called for a treaty outlawing all nuclear explosive tests. "The conclusion of such a treaty," he said, "would check the spiraling arms race in one of its most dangerous areas... the further spread of nuclear arms."

"Surely this goal," he said, "is sufficiently important to require our steady pursuit, yielding neither to the temptation to give up the whole effort nor the temptation to give up our insistence on vital and responsible safeguards."

Despite global tensions, despite the scientific barriers, despite the political divisiveness, we did not give up. The United States is proud of its role in the negotiation of a comprehensive ban on nuclear explosive testing and we were proud to be the first nation to sign the CTBT after it opened for signature in 1996.

The United States signed the CTBT because we recognized the potential of this Treaty to significantly strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime, thereby enhancing the security of our nation and every nation around the world.

As President Obama stated, the full potential of the CTBT remains unfulfilled, but the United States is steadfast in our support for the Treaty and for the critical work of the Preparatory Commission. Our dedication to the Treaty is demonstrated through unmatched monetary and technical support and our clear commitment to ensuring that the verification regime is completed, and functions as intended.

We hope that all of today's statements of support for the Treaty will be transformed into tangible resources. Every Signatory to the Treaty must support the work of the Preparatory Commission to complete the Treaty's verification regime and help enhance the effectiveness of the Provisional

Technical Secretariat. We must all work to upgrade the International Data Centre (IDC) and ensure the completion of an effective On-Site Inspection capability.

Despite our clear support for the CTBT, the United States acknowledges that we have not completed our work on ratification and that our delay gives cover to other Annex 2 countries who have also failed to secure ratification of the Treaty.

That is why we are building support for this Treaty, state by state, and sometimes person by person, because we know that a global ban on nuclear explosive testing is good for our country. We are making it clear to the American public that our scientists and military experts agree that the CTBT is verifiable and we do not need to conduct explosive testing in order to maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear stockpile.

I will not deny that this work is difficult and that we face domestic political obstacles. That does not change that fact that this Treaty is in our national security interest and so it is incumbent upon us to convince those that doubt this fact. We are certain that we have a good case to make. We will continue to make it. We will also continue to look for ways to affirm the political norm against testing nuclear weapons.

As we work through our process, I call upon all Annex 2 States to complete their own ratification processes. I also call upon those States to tell this community about your plans for ratification. Moving forward in a clear and transparent way is what we can all do to honor this anniversary and all the work that went into getting us here.

Ladies and Gentleman, 53 years and 3 days ago, the world was issued a challenge, and today we are closer than ever to bringing a global ban on nuclear explosive testing into force. We cannot and must not give up.

Thank you.