

Remarks to the Senate Foreign Relation Committee
Representative Ellen O. Tauscher
Nominee for Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security

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Majority Leader Hoyer, thank you for your kind words and your steadfast friendship. It has been an honor serving with you and I know the House is in good hands with your leadership.

Sen. Feinstein, thank you for your generous introduction. Most importantly, thank you for your friendship and partnership over these many years. For so many people, especially women, you are an icon. To me, you are a model public servant and an inspiration.

Mr. Chairman, congratulations on your new role. I am impressed with the energy and creativity you have brought to the committee, especially the pace and depth of the committee's hearings and investigations. You have been on an extraordinary journey since you testified before this committee in 1971. Our nation is better off because of your determination and courage.

Senator Lugar, I admire your passion for keeping the world safe from nuclear weapons. I have long considered myself a fellow traveler on these issues and it would be an honor to work with you should I be confirmed.

I also want to thank my fellow Californian, Senator Barbara Boxer, for her longtime support and friendship and, I want to acknowledge my former House colleagues, now representing their great states in the Senate, Ben Cardin, Jim DeMint, Kirsten Gillibrand, Johnny Isakson, Robert Menendez, and Roger Wicker.

I will miss serving in the House. It has been a wonderful and rewarding experience. I want to especially thank my constituents in California's 10th Congressional district. It has been an honor to serve them for the past 13 years and I wouldn't be here if it were not for them.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my father, John O'Kane, my nephew, Conor, and my fiancé, Jim Cieslak, who are here today.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lugar and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you as President

Obama's nominee for the position of Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. I am deeply grateful for the trust that both President Obama and Secretary Clinton have placed in me.

I also look forward to working with Vice President Biden, who has brought years of passion and understanding to these issues.

Even though I might be leaving Congress, I won't be going far. I assure you that I will be in frequent and close contact with this committee, the House Foreign Relations Committee, and the House and Senate appropriations committees.

Like all Americans who are my age and grew up during the Cold War, I participated in my share of "duck and cover drills" as a little girl in East Newark, New Jersey. I can remember walking home from school for lunch, as planes flew overhead, reciting the Rosary, and praying that there would not be nuclear war.

I developed an interest and expertise in nonproliferation issues because I have had the opportunity to represent the only Congressional district in the country with two nuclear laboratories, Lawrence Livermore and Sandia California. After I was first elected to Congress in 1996, I decided to join the House Armed Services Committee and the Strategic Forces subcommittee, which I now chair.

So thanks to my constituents, and by dint of geography, working to reduce the threat of nuclear and stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become my life's work.

I realize that if confirmed as Under Secretary of State I will have multiple areas of responsibility. Let me review several of them.

First, I will have an opportunity to advance the President's agenda on missile defense. In my current capacity as chair of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, I have traveled throughout the world to address the threat of missile proliferation and promote missile defense cooperation and I am committed to working with our friends and allies to defend against the threat from ballistic missiles.

I share the president's commitment to better protect our forces and those of our allies by fielding our most capable theater missile defense systems, including the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System and Standard Missile 3 programs. I look forward to working with you and the other relevant committees to promote our missile defense efforts.

I also look forward to working with you to ensure that the State Department has a smart approach to arms transfers and security assistance so that we contribute to our nation's security and to that of our allies. In this context, I will continue to seek your advice for ways to make our defense trade export licensing system more efficient and timely, while keeping controls on the sensitive goods and technologies that will maintain U.S. superiority in military conflicts.

By working together, I am hopeful that we provide our allies and partners with military training and the equipment that they need to protect their own national security needs and to operate with U.S. forces in coalition operations. I will work to promote our diplomatic counter-piracy agenda, focusing on the Secretary's themes of multilateral coordination, removing barriers to prosecutions of suspected pirates, and working with the shipping industry on self-protection measures.

As you know, the principal focus of this job is to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and material.

In his speech in Prague earlier this spring, President Obama called for a world without nuclear weapons. I am committed to working toward that goal, a goal that is shared by Senator John McCain, military leaders like Colin Powell and three former Secretaries of State and Defense from both parties and Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.).

As the president said, we do not live in a world where we unilaterally disarm, but one in which we reduce our nuclear arsenals based on mutual agreements, verification and compliance.

By reducing our nuclear arsenal, the United States, in my view, will be in a better position to secure the international cooperation necessary to strengthen efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear as well as chemical and biological weapons.

I believe that we will also be more prepared to respond to cases of noncompliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by states such as Iran and North Korea.

Presidents Kennedy and Reagan also shared this dream. Forty five years ago, President Kennedy encouraged us not to succumb to cynicism. In a speech given at

American University, he said that “Our problems are man-made therefore they can be solved by man.” And women.

He also said then that a belief that we cannot achieve a nuclear free world is a “dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable, that mankind is doomed, that we are gripped by forces we cannot control.”

Speaking before the Japanese Diet in 1983, President Ronald Reagan said, “The only value in possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they can't be used ever. I know I speak for people everywhere when I say our dream is to see the day when nuclear weapons will be banished from the face of the Earth.”

President Obama – like his predecessors – acknowledged that achieving this goal will take “patience and persistence,” and that it might not happen in our lifetime.

Nevertheless, I want to work with you, together, to take the necessary steps to reduce the world’s nuclear arsenals while making sure that we maintain a safe, secure and reliable deterrent against any adversary and an effective defense for our allies.

As you know, the threat that President Obama outlined in his speech in Prague is both more complex and unpredictable than it was a generation ago. Dangerous terrorists seeking the world’s most dangerous weapons have turned the nuclear equation upside down.

President Obama highlighted this when he said that, “the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up. More nations have acquired these weapons. Testing has continued. Black market trade in nuclear secrets and nuclear materials abound. The technology to build a bomb has spread. Terrorists are determined to buy, build or steal one. Our efforts to contain these dangers are centered on a global non-proliferation regime, but as more people and nations break the rules, we could reach the point where the center cannot hold.”

The devastation from even a small nuclear bomb exploding in our nation’s capital is unthinkable. My good friend, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, has studied this issue. According to testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee last year, a 10 kiloton device detonated near the White House would kill more than 100,000 people. Another 100,000 would need

to be decontaminated from the radiation. It's unlikely that our government, or any government, is equipped to handle a crisis like that.

Beyond the terrifying loss of life, such an attack would threaten our economy, our social fabric and our way of life.

These issues underscore the serious responsibility that I will undertake if confirmed as Under Secretary of State. Please allow me to review a few of these issues in greater detail.

Progress toward a nuclear free world begins with a new verifiable agreement to further reduce the U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals. The United States and Russia competed with one another for years by expanding the size and increasing the scope of our nuclear arsenals. But we have made great progress working together under the INF, START and Moscow treaties to greatly reduce our nuclear arsenals.

START, the treaty at the foundation of our strategic disarmament agenda, expires in December. We have six months to establish a successor. The United States and Russian delegations are already hard at work to develop a treaty that builds on the progress we have already made and provide a foundation for further reductions.

The follow-on agreement will serve our country well by ensuring predictability and transparency in our strategic nuclear relationship with Russia. I look forward to seeking your input on this matter.

We must continue to focus special attention on the urgent challenges that North Korea and Iran pose to the international non-proliferation regime. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with my colleagues in the administration and the Congress to implement the President's policy of helping Iran make the right choice, to end its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability and to rebuild the trust of the international community by fulfilling all of its United Nation Security Council, non-proliferation, and other obligations.

North Korea's nuclear test represents a grave threat to regional and international security. I want to work together to ensure that North Korea returns to the negotiating table and abandons its nuclear program in a complete and verifiable manner.

At the same time, I am hopeful that we can work together to come up with a strategy to reduce the incentive for countries to pursue similar capabilities by supporting the expansion of nuclear energy in conformity with the highest standards of safety, security and nonproliferation. I want to assure you that verification and compliance would be at the heart of any agreement.

In her Senate confirmation testimony, Secretary Clinton underscored that that the Nonproliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the nonproliferation regime, and the United States must exercise the leadership needed to shore up the regime. To this end, the Obama Administration has developed a nuclear nonproliferation strategy based on multiple fronts. Effective verification and compliance are fundamental to its approach.

The Obama administration is strongly committed to working with members of this Committee and with all members of the Senate to obtain your advice and consent to construct a way to ease any concerns, especially as they relate to compliance and verification with respect to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

In my view, working toward ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is one way that we can persuade other states to permanently end nuclear testing and curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with you, Mr. Chairman, Sen. Lugar, and the members of this Committee, to make sure you have the most up to date technical, military, and diplomatic analyses on issues relating to the CTBT.

To this end, I share the administration's commitment to obtaining the Senate's advice and consent to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and to launch a diplomatic effort to bring states that have not signed the treaty on board so that it can be brought into force. I will, if confirmed, work closely with you and your staffs, to ease concerns, especially as they relate to compliance and verification.

As you know, significant progress has been made over the last decade in our ability to verify a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Confidence has also grown in our ability to maintain our nuclear deterrent without testing.

Last month, I attended the dedication of the National Ignition Facility, the largest laser in the world, located at the Lawrence Livermore Lab in my district in California, which will allow the United States to replicate conditions occurring in a nuclear explosion without the need for an actual test. The network of sensors that

make up the CTBTO's International Monitoring System proved its value in detecting the latest North Korean test, as well as its 2006 test.

If I am confirmed, I will focus hard on that effort to make sure you have the most up to date technical, military, and diplomatic analyses on issues relating to the CTBT.

As part of my responsibilities if I am confirmed, I would help the administration negotiate a global, verifiable Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty. In my view, such a treaty is a critical step toward containing the growth of military nuclear programs around the world.

The best way to stop terrorists from getting their hands on nuclear weapons is to secure bomb-making fissile materials at their source. Thanks to Senator Lugar and former Senator Sam Nunn's visionary leadership, our cooperative threat reduction assistance programs have made great strides in upgrading security at Russian nuclear facilities.

But the problem is not confined to Russia. We need to remove potentially vulnerable highly enriched uranium from research reactor sites around the world and to convert those reactors to operate with low-enriched uranium, which cannot be used in nuclear weapons. These are urgent tasks and I want to work together to achieve President Obama's goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear material within four years.

We must also continue to look for ways to enhance our security by helping others destroy weapons of mass destruction, such as the successful effort to help destroy chemical weapons in Russia, which you, Senator Lugar, most recently witnessed in Russia on May 29.

I look forward to working with you to develop measures to secure nuclear materials so that they do not fall into the hands of terrorists.

In addition, I will work to revitalize the International Atomic Energy Agency, which implements NPT-mandated safeguards. As more countries look to nuclear power to answer their energy needs, we must ensure that the international body is equipped to inspect and oversee their programs and help them ensure the physical security of their nuclear installations and materials. We also must work with the international community to establish clear and enforceable penalties for those who abuse the NPT's right of withdrawal.

Nuclear materials are of special concern, and I look forward to working with President Obama to organize a global summit on securing nuclear materials next year. It will be vital to build upon Senator Lugar's efforts to strengthen our threat reduction programs around the world to reduce the threat from unsecured weapons, components and other materials that terrorist organizations or other non-government actors could use to further their ends.

The A.Q. Khan nuclear black market network proves how important it is to work harder to strengthen U.S. and multilateral export controls and to implement United Nation Security Council Resolution 1540 more effectively. I want to work with you to expand and institutionalize these nonproliferation tools, including our efforts to interdict shipments of weapons of mass destruction through the Proliferation Security Initiative.

But beyond the policies, and perhaps even more importantly, I want to work with you to communicate the importance of arms control and non-proliferation.

We need a constant, deliberate effort to contain and reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world. We need to tell a better story and develop a better narrative to convey why this issue, which for many harkens back to a bygone era, is still important. We need clearer symbols and optics so that your constituents and citizens around the world understand why we're doing what we're doing.

The ever-present threats around the globe mean the clock is ticking. My hope is that we can work together to enact verifiable treaties and strengthen existing regimes, including the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, and the Wassenaar Arrangement. We can implement the President's call to make the PSI and Global Initiative enduring international institutions.

I believe that these actions will send a message that the international community will no longer tolerate proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lugar, and members of the Committee, thank you for your leadership on these issues and thank you for your time and consideration of my nomination. If I am confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with you on a wide range of national security initiatives that President Obama has proposed. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

