

**UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE JENKINS TESTIMONY
“THE FUTURE OF ARMS CONTROL AND DETERRENCE”
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
May 15, 2024**

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to testify about the future of arms control and deterrence.

We at the State Department, together with our interagency colleagues, work to mitigate international security risks and advance U.S. and allied interests. As the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, I want to emphasize that the global security architecture is under strain. In response to these pressures, the three bureaus that I oversee are applying a mix of tools in clear-sighted and innovative ways to uphold strategic stability.

One tool is deterrence, including building U.S. capabilities and that of our allies and partners. In Europe, we are working to get Ukraine the support it needs today with an eye toward its future in the Euro-Atlantic Region, as well as working to reinforce NATO’s Eastern Flank and welcoming our new Allies in Finland and Sweden. In the Indo-Pacific, we are building on long-standing alliances, redoubling our support for Taiwan’s defense in the face of an increasingly aggressive People’s Republic of China (PRC), and developing new partnerships, like Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS), to strengthen regional security. In the Middle East, we are working aggressively to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza that secures the release of Israeli hostages and allows for a surge in humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. We are also deepening robust partnerships in the Gulf region to counter threats from Iran. In Africa as well as in the Americas, we face new security challenges from Russia and the PRC but benefit from decades-long security cooperation partnerships that for many countries still makes the United States their partner of choice. The tools of the bureaus that I lead help to support this Administration’s deterrence policies in this

changing security environment, and I am proud of the innovative approaches my bureaus have taken to meeting this moment.

A key component of deterrence is our nuclear posture. The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirms our continuing commitment to a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent for the United States, as well as our NATO Allies and Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

But reliance on deterrence alone will not solve the various security challenges we face. As the NPR lays out, arms control complements deterrence, and *both* are essential to strategic stability. Arms control and risk reduction can avoid wasteful arms races, establish guardrails for strategic competition, mitigate crisis instability, and – should deterrence fail – help control escalation and mutually limit the destructive potential of conflict.

Thank you for the invitation to address these topics here today. My opening testimony will address how the State Department, particularly the bureaus under my responsibility, is using tools like arms control and risk reduction to preserve strategic stability and secure U.S. and allied interests. These bureaus do far more than this, with responsibilities ranging from promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to peace operations capacity building. I will focus on arms control and deterrence in my opening remarks, and am happy to discuss other issues in response to your questions.

I want to begin by providing some context. We are witnessing a Russia that continues its war against Ukraine, routinely employs irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, and has violated many of its treaty obligations. At the same time, the PRC is undertaking a rapid and opaque nuclear weapons buildup and is pursuing a larger and more diverse nuclear arsenal that calls into question its stated intentions and strategy. Meanwhile, the emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence simultaneously offers benefits while introducing potential threats. All these developments increase risks of arms racing and conflict stemming from miscalculation or misperception.

While challenging, this dynamic security environment also presents opportunities to demonstrate U.S. leadership in promoting stability. For decades, through hard work with allies, partners, and adversaries alike, we have developed tools to limit these dangers. We have used arms control measures and agreements to impose constraints on States, prevent dangerous arms races, and reduce the risk of nuclear conflict. We have developed a range of multilateral agreements enshrining legally binding restrictions pertaining to many types of weapons of mass destruction – not just nuclear arms, but also chemical, biological, and soon, we hope, radiological weapons. Arms control instruments and institutions have provided transparency, accountability, and predictability within the international security environment and the vast majority of countries abide by their obligations.

The State Department also recognizes that arms control is more than just legally binding agreements. It also includes risk reduction tools, such as facilitating crisis communications, providing missile launch notifications, and building norms of responsible behavior. All these tools make the international community more stable and more secure. They give us a foundation for our criticism of the PRC's refusal to engage on substantive nuclear risk reduction measures amid its rapid and opaque nuclear weapons build up and strengthen our case to the international community that Beijing is not acting as a responsible nuclear power. Their existence and widespread support also strengthen our ability to rally the international community when countries like Russia violate obligations or disregard commitments.

In the face of this increasingly complex security environment, we are pragmatic about what we can achieve – and remain confident that arms control is a critical means to reduce risk and enhance stability.

Russia

First, as it relates to Russia, the United States is working to preserve strategic stability while holding Russia accountable for its irresponsible behavior and malign influence. This includes Russia's violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, where we assess Russia has used the choking agent chloropicrin and riot control agents as a method of warfare against Ukrainian forces. The United States is working to strengthen the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, build national response capacity, and pursue accountability for such violations. On the conventional weapons side, the United States and our NATO Allies condemned Russia's withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the United States and NATO Allied CFE States Parties (22 in total) suspended all of our CFE Treaty obligations, consistent with our rights under international law.

We are also holding Moscow responsible for its legally invalid purported suspension of the New START Treaty. In the annual treaty implementation report that we provided to this committee in January, the United States found Russia in non-compliance with several of its Treaty obligations, some for a second year in a row. In 2023, in response to Russian violations, we adopted proportionate and reversible countermeasures which are fully consistent with international law, aimed to induce Russia's return to full compliance with the treaty, and ensured that Russia derives no advantages from its violations.

In less than two years, New START, our last remaining bilateral nuclear arms control agreement with Russia, will expire under its terms. We have expressed our readiness to work with Moscow on managing nuclear risk and developing a mutually acceptable future arms control framework that advances U.S. and allied interests. After all, no one – including Russia -- benefits from an unconstrained security environment. Russia, however, has shown no interest in good faith engagement on these issues. This irresponsible approach risks jeopardizing a key pillar of global nuclear stability. We are calling on all States to join us in urging Russia to return to

full implementation of its existing obligations and engage in discussions on managing nuclear risk and a treaty to follow New START.

Russia continues to condition engagement on arms control on the United States ending its support for Ukraine against Russia's invasion. Let me be clear: Russia's reckless attempts to hold bilateral nuclear arms control hostage will not diminish our steadfast support for Ukraine and European security. We will continue to work with our Allies and partners to support Ukraine's self-defense against Russian aggression. In close partnership with DoD, we have provided more than \$50 billion in support for Ukraine's defense since February 2022, and thanks to strong bipartisan support in the passage of the National Security Supplemental, we will continue to stand with more than 50 countries, united with Ukraine.

We are under no illusion that the road ahead will be straightforward. After all, managing our nuclear competition with Russia has never been an easy task, and today may be the most challenging it has ever been. But rest assured, we will continue our close coordination with allies and partners to ensure Russia gains no advantage from its irresponsible actions. While we remain committed to pursuing responsible nuclear arms control measures, we must prepare for all eventualities, including ways to address a potential world without strategic nuclear arms control.

The PRC

Let me now turn to the issue of the PRC. The 2023 China Military Power report estimates that the PRC possesses more than 500 operational nuclear warheads and will probably have more than 1,000 operational nuclear warheads by 2030. Beijing's development of a larger, more diverse nuclear arsenal is deeply concerning, and raises questions about the trajectory of the PRC's nuclear weapons program, its evolving nuclear posture, and its strategic goals. This opacity reduces predictability, increasing the risk of unintended escalation as well as undesirable, costly arms races.

In addition to these risks, the PRC's nuclear weapons expansion raises the specter that the United States may soon face two expansionary and significantly nuclear-armed peers. As this dynamic evolves, the United States must continue to ensure a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent, as well as a strong and credible extended deterrence, to safeguard U.S. and allied interests. At the same time, we must manage those deterrence relationships responsibly by pursuing risk reduction and arms control measures. This helps our security, our allies' security, and can help make the world a safer place.

Last November, a Department of State-led interagency delegation met with the PRC on issues related to arms control and nonproliferation, including risk reduction. The meeting enabled a preliminary discussion on potential measures for managing and reducing risks with the PRC across multiple domains, including nuclear and outer space. Unfortunately, the PRC has declined a follow-on meeting and has not provided a substantive response to the risk reduction suggestions we put forward. We will continue to increase diplomatic pressure on the PRC to increase transparency of its nuclear arsenal and to constructively work with the United States to advance concrete measures that reduce the risk of unintended escalation or conflict and help manage competition responsibly, as the world expects us to do. We are focused on achieving results, but we should all understand, that progress will not come easily or immediately.

In the face of the PRC's nuclear weapons build-up, as well as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) expanding nuclear and missile forces, the State Department is working to strengthen the United States' extended deterrence relationships with key allies in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. commitment to strengthening extended deterrence with the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Australia is steadfast and enduring. Together with the DoD, the State Department leads frequent consultations with these allies, through which we sharpen and coordinate our full suite of tools – diplomatic, informational, military, and economic – to promote stability in the Indo-Pacific. In addition to these extended deterrence dialogues, we

support our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond by bolstering their conventional capabilities via our long-standing security assistance programs. Be it the Republic of Korea, Japan, Taiwan, or the Philippines, we continue to ensure stability in the region by investing in our allies and partners' capabilities to defend themselves.

Multilateral Nuclear Issues

The United States is promoting strategic stability in multilateral fora, as well. The United States continues to advocate for concrete risk reduction measures to enhance transparency and stability among the P5 countries, the five recognized nuclear-weapon states under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). These measures include establishing crisis communications channels; sharing ballistic missile launch notifications; and committing to maintain a "human in the loop" for command, control, and employment of nuclear weapons. The P3 already support maintaining human control and involvement for all actions critical to informing and executing sovereign decisions concerning nuclear weapons employment and we strongly believe that Russia and the PRC should join us in this commitment. We are also working with partners in the NPT review process to reinforce the NPT as the foundation of efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and nuclear war, as well as to explain our responsible nuclear posture and increase pressure on Russia and the PRC to be more transparent and to engage in strategic dialogue, risk reduction, and arms control. The United States has also long supported nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) treaties as a complement to the global Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a means for extending certain legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We would urge the Senate to ratify those protocols previously signed and submitted for advice and consent.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to demonstrate leadership in the multilateral international security arena. We urge States to join us in building off the momentum generated last year in the UN General Assembly, which overwhelmingly adopted a U.S.-sponsored resolution calling for

negotiation of a ban on State use of radiological weapons. We will pursue those negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We will continue to pursue the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) on the basis of the Shannon Mandate (CD/1299), which is more important than ever with the PRC's buildup of nuclear weapon and fissile material production capabilities. Until an FMCT enters into force, we will coordinate with international partners to continue to press for the PRC, as the only Nuclear Weapon State that has not yet done so, to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Outer Space

In the outer space domain, the United States is upholding existing obligations and developing and advancing proposals for responsible international behavior, in contrast to hypocritical proposals and dangerous behavior from Russia and the PRC. For almost 60 years, the Outer Space Treaty and its prohibition on the placement of nuclear weapons in outer space have been the foundational element of the international legal framework. Today, that regime is under threat. As we have noted previously, the Administration assesses that Russia is developing a new satellite carrying a nuclear device. Placement by a State Party to the Outer Space Treaty of a nuclear weapon in orbit would not only violate the treaty, but also threaten the satellites operated by countries and companies around the globe, as well as to the vital communications, scientific, meteorological, agricultural, commercial, and national security services we all depend upon.

In response to this threat, President Biden has directed a series of actions, including direct engagement with Russia and with several other key countries around the world. Additionally, the United States and Japan, with more than 60 co-sponsors, proposed a UN Security Council resolution that would have reaffirmed the fundamental obligation of States Parties to the Outer Space Treaty not to place nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons of mass destruction in orbit around the Earth. Unfortunately, Russia vetoed

this resolution, which should have been uncontroversial. We have heard President Putin say publicly that Russia has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space. If that were the case, Russia would not have vetoed this resolution. Doing so raises serious questions as to its commitment to complying with its legally binding obligations under the Outer Space Treaty.

Because this issue is critical to U.S. national security, and the security of all states, we will continue using our diplomatic tools to raise this issue bilaterally, in the UN, and in other appropriate multilateral fora until Russia provides credible assurances that they have ceased these efforts. The United States has already begun considering approaches to help ensure that countries cannot deploy nuclear weapons in orbit undetected, and we intend to engage with other States Parties as our ideas evolve.

We also intend to continue our important work on norms of responsible behavior in outer space, which the United States has been a leader in developing. We have proposed concrete measures in this arena, including our commitment not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests, as first stated by Vice President Harris in 2022, and to which 37 other countries have now made national commitments. We have also worked within the UN to successfully adopt a resolution calling on states to make the same pledge, with the overwhelming support of 155 countries for this resolution, and will continue to support such efforts that enhance space stability and security.

Emerging Technology

We are applying a similar approach to promoting norms of responsible behavior for the use of artificial intelligence in military applications. In February, in close coordination with the Defense Department, we successfully launched the Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy – a major step toward furthering international norms around the responsible, stabilizing, and beneficial use of

these technologies. Fifty-five States have already endorsed the Declaration, which articulates ten foundational responsible practices for military development and deployment of AI and autonomy. Building a consensus around these norms and practices to manage the potential risks of AI while harnessing the technology's benefits will improve predictability and stability in the international security environment.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to advance efforts to enhance collaboration with partners and allies around the world while upholding high security standards, including through efforts to increase efficiencies in our systems. Thanks to action by the U.S. Congress, we are implementing authorities related to export control exemptions with Australia and the UK as part of AUKUS.

Conclusion

In conclusion, diplomacy lies at the core of all these efforts – deterring our adversaries, ensuring they understand our resolve to defend our country and our allies, curbing the risk of miscalculation and misunderstanding, contributing to shared goals of nonproliferation, assuring allies that U.S. extended deterrence is strong and credible, and deepening international norms around the responsible use of emerging technologies.

The State Department remains staunchly committed to upholding strategic stability and using the mutually reinforcing tools of arms control and deterrence to safeguard U.S. and allied security. We recognize this is a challenging international security environment - which is precisely why we need these tools. Few objectives are as critical as reducing the risk of nuclear war and preventing costly arms races, and few objectives demand more bipartisan action. I look forward to continuing to work closely with this Committee and with your colleagues across Capitol Hill to advance these objectives.

Thank you.