

Statement of Jeffrey L. Eberhardt
Nominee for Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation, with the Rank
of Ambassador
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
April 9, 2019

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee.

It is an honor to appear before this Committee as President Trump's nominee to be the Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Pompeo for the confidence they have placed in me, and for the opportunity – with your approval – to continue to serve this country in a new and challenging position of responsibility. I am proud to be joined today by two of my sons, Todd and Joshua, both of whom have the distinction of being born in what was then known as West Germany, during my first overseas tour.

I joined the State Department following my 23 years in the Army, and have worked on nuclear-related issues across three successive Administrations. I participated in the Six-Party Talks beginning when I was still on active duty in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and continuing when I joined the Department. I worked on the Iran and North Korea files for many years. Closer to our subject today, I have been involved in the review cycles of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) since 2005, participating in preparations for and working on the U.S. delegations to multiple NPT Preparatory Committees and Review Conferences. I was part of the State team contributing to both the 2010 and 2018 Nuclear Posture Reviews. I also contributed to numerous policy reviews over the past years on issues such as the proposed Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the NPT itself.

What has struck me from these years of serving different Administrations, Mr. Chairman, is the strong element of bipartisan continuity in U.S. nuclear policy. There have been a few guiding principles that date back decades – for instance, that the United States will work to reduce the numbers and salience of nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of someday eliminating them, but that for so long as nuclear deterrence remains necessary, we will maintain an effective nuclear force. The United States has also remained steadfast in its commitment to maintaining the global nonproliferation regime, recognizing the enormous dangers that would arise from allowing the spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries. This remarkable continuity is a credit to the many thoughtful and dedicated professionals that this nation has been fortunate to have serving in positions of responsibility for these matters. I have learned a great deal from them. They have left big shoes to fill, but if confirmed, I will strive to do so.

It is no secret that this NPT review cycle, which will culminate with the Review Conference in May 2020, is a challenging one. The United States has been engaged in wide-ranging diplomatic efforts to prepare for that conference, stressing the importance of shoring up the nonproliferation

regime against the challenges it faces from North Korea and Iran, stressing the importance to human prosperity and development of sharing the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology, and stressing the degree to which these benefits depend upon the solid foundation provided by adherence to “best practices” in the realm of nuclear safeguards, safety, and security. If confirmed, I will work to support – and to help lead – U.S. diplomatic efforts to protect and advance the important principles and objectives of the NPT.

This may not be an easy road. There are those who believe, for example, that – despite having reduced our nuclear arsenal by approximately 88 percent from its Cold War high – the United States has not reduced far enough or fast enough. There is also the long-standing problem of how to advance toward a Middle East weapons of mass destruction free zone, an issue that dates to the Treaty’s indefinite extension in 1995.

These challenges are daunting, Mr. Chairman, but what is clear is that without strong U.S. leadership, achieving success will not be possible. And we are seeking to meet these challenges. Success, I believe, should begin by ensuring that when nations meet in 2020 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty’s entry into force, we all recommit ourselves to the NPT in all its aspects. The NPT has been extraordinarily successful in stemming what was, decades ago, expected to be rampant proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thankfully, that has not happened. There have been setbacks, most notably with North Korea, but we live in a much safer world thanks to the NPT. And the expansion of the many benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy have been made possible by the strong nonproliferation norms established by the Treaty.

The United States is also exercising leadership in the discussion of disarmament. Even as the obstacles to further progress have increased thanks to a deteriorating security environment, we are engaging a broad range of international partners in beginning to build a serious, multilateral discussion of what must be done to improve the security environment to allow further progress in reducing nuclear arsenals.

If confirmed, I will work to advance these important objectives, striving to help ensure that the NPT – and the broader nonproliferation regime that has been built around that Treaty over the last 50 years – is positioned for continued success for another half century.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.