

Statement of Robert A. Wood

Nominee for
U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
February 4, 2014

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee.

It is a great honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, or CD, in Geneva.

I am also grateful to Secretary Kerry and Acting Under Secretary Gottemoeller for their support and for giving me this new opportunity to serve our country. I also wish to thank my wife, Gita, and son, Jonathan, for their love and support.

Five years ago in Prague, President Obama committed the United States to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, a goal he reaffirmed last June in Berlin.

The President emphasized that achieving this goal will not be easy and may well take many more years of effort. Step-by-step, practical multilateral arms control is an essential part of this process, in which the CD has a valuable role to play.

Throughout its history, the CD and its predecessor bodies have made significant contributions to global arms control and nonproliferation efforts. The Outer Space Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty all were negotiated there, on the basis of consensus, and with the benefit of American leadership.

The U.S. priority for the CD continues to be the negotiation of a treaty banning the further production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the so-called Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty or FMCT.

An FMCT is in the national security interests of the United States because it would end the production of weapons-grade fissile material needed to create nuclear weapons in the states where it is still on-going, cap stockpiles worldwide, and provide the basis for future reductions in nuclear arsenals. For these reasons, an

FMCT is one of the President's arms control priorities and the logical next step in the multilateral nuclear disarmament process.

While fellow CD member state Pakistan has resisted efforts to begin FMCT negotiations, the United States continues to discuss with Pakistan and others possible ways to break the long-standing CD impasse.

Moving forward on an FMCT will not be easy, but if confirmed, I look forward to using my many years of multilateral diplomatic experience to achieve this important U.S. objective.

As part of my disarmament portfolio if confirmed, I will also play a role in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, review process. Specifically, I will have responsibility for issues related to the NPT's Article VI, which addresses nuclear disarmament.

This spring, a preparatory meeting will set the stage for the NPT's next five year Review Conference in 2015. If confirmed by the time of this meeting, I will remind our partners and friends around the world of the enduring United States commitment to our arms control and nonproliferation obligations, and explain our strong record of accomplishment in this regard. I will also make clear that the road to a nuclear weapons-free world is only possible through a realistic, step-by-step approach, with each step building on the last and supported with strong verification measures. This distinguished committee has a long and successful history of supporting such arms control efforts on a bipartisan basis, which has made the world a safer place.

In working to achieve this long-term nuclear disarmament objective, the CD remains an essential multilateral institution. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to make the CD an active contributor to international peace and security.

If confirmed, I plan to consult closely with this committee and other members of Congress, as well as their staffs.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to come before you today. I look forward to any questions you may have.