

## US POLICIES BELIEVE CLAIMS OF ARTICLE VI COMPLIANCE

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The story being presented by the US delegation to this NPT Review Conference that gradual nuclear disarmament is underway is an egregious falsehood. The reality of US policy is exactly the opposite.

No effort or cost is being spared to replace or modernize every part of the entire US nuclear arsenal, including every delivery system and every launch platform, and including all the expensive factories required to build thousands of modified and new warheads and bombs. Every resulting weapon system will have one or more new military characteristics, including greater stealth, accuracy, variable yields, and greater killing power against silos and command centers with shorter flight times. New long-range stealthy nuclear cruise missiles, not subject to any treaty limitations, are to be built in large quantities. This, not gradual reduction or disarmament, is the US program of record.<sup>1</sup>

This unprecedented, audacious plan was negotiated within the government in 2010, the year after President Obama's Prague speech and Nobel Peace Prize, when New START was submitted for ratification. The plan has been successfully presented to Congress for authorization and funding every year since then, and is fully funded. While a (very) few members of Congress have (unsuccessfully) argued that this program is excessive in one or another part, not one member of Congress has argued for any process that could lead to complete nuclear disarmament.

Meanwhile no nuclear weapons are actually being retired. Only obsolete warheads retired by previous administrations are being dismantled—and these only partially, with some hard-to-produce nuclear components being retained for potential reuse. The Obama administration has retired fewer warheads than any other in post-Cold-War history. All dismantlement of warheads retired since 2009 is being deferred indefinitely, pending successful initiation of production of new warheads and bombs in the new factories now under design and construction and slated for completion in the mid-2020s.

Given these realities, how are we to interpret statements to the Review Conference like this one from Ambassador Wood on 1 May?

*Disarmament is taking place every day in the United States. Over the past two decades alone the United States has dismantled 10,251 nuclear warheads. That works out to dismantling an average of more than one warhead per day, every day, for 20 years. And this complex and costly work continues.*

Yes, the partial dismantlement of warheads retired many years ago is still taking place, though the pace of dismantlement has dramatically slowed since the early 1990s and may stop altogether in the early 2020s when dismantlement of obsolete warheads can be stretched no further.<sup>2</sup> Even so, Secretary Kerry's promise to the

Review Conference to increase the pace of dismantling old warheads by 20% was immediately attacked by the congressional majority and is now essentially dead. In response to Kerry's promise, language was added to the annual military authorization bill to limit dismantlement spending to about the current level—which was also the administration's requested amount, raising the question of how Secretary Kerry's promise was to be paid for in the first place.<sup>3</sup>

Thus at the moment there is unanimity within the US government *against* any pursuit of "negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament," as required by NPT Article VI. Congress has even repeatedly passed (and this President has signed) laws of dubious constitutionality restricting the President's authority to negotiate further disarmament.<sup>4</sup>

Deploying, sustaining, and modernizing the huge US nuclear arsenal will cost at least *one trillion dollars* through the early 2030s, a huge expense even for the US and a commitment that demonstrates the perfect vacuum of sincerity in US disarmament promises. Nuclear weapons are now, and are slated to remain, central in US security policy. As former Obama White House nuclear czar Gary Samore recently said, "Nuclear disarmament is not going to happen.... It's a fantasy. We need our weapons for our safety, and we're not going to give them up."<sup>5</sup>

And that's the way things will remain unless the non-nuclear-armed states decide, on their own, to fill the legal gap that lends legitimacy to nuclear weapons and prestige to the states that possess them, with a treaty banning the production, possession, sharing, and use of nuclear weapons. Such a ban would be an "effective measure" to end the nuclear arms race and bring about nuclear disarmament, as envisioned by article VI. •

1 Further details and references are available in the U.S. chapter of *Assuring destruction forever*: 2015 edition. See also "Air Force Wants 1,000 New Cruise Missiles," Kingston Reif, Arms Control Association, May 7, 2015, [http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2015\\_05/News/Air-Force-Wants-Thousand-New-Cruise-Missiles](http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2015_05/News/Air-Force-Wants-Thousand-New-Cruise-Missiles).

2 U.S. Department of State, "Transparency in the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Stockpile," April 27, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/npt/statements/241165.htm>.

3 "HASC Republicans Oppose Admin. Plan to Accelerate Dismantlement Work by 20 Percent; Kerry Announces Current Stockpile Size of 4,717," Todd Jacobson, Nuclear Security and Deterrence Monitor, May 1, 2015 (paywall). Modest increases in dismantlement spending over the authorized and appropriated amounts could be done but would require approval of congressional committee chairs and ranking members, which under present conditions would almost certainly not be forthcoming.

4 See for example sections 1041-1047 under Section E, "Nuclear Forces," in the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr1540enr/pdf/BILLS-112hr1540enr.pdf>. Subsequent NDAs expand on these first post-New START limitations.

5 "U.S. unease about nuclear-weapons fuel takes aim at a South African vault," Birch, Douglas, and Smith, R. Jeffrey, Center for Public Integrity, 14 March 2015, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/us-unease-about-nuclear-weapons-fuel-takes-aim-at-a-south-african-vault/2015/03/13/b17389f6-2bc1-4515-962d-03c655d0e62d\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/us-unease-about-nuclear-weapons-fuel-takes-aim-at-a-south-african-vault/2015/03/13/b17389f6-2bc1-4515-962d-03c655d0e62d_story.html).

