

- On July 7, the UN conference negotiating a treaty to ban nuclear weapons adopted a draft treaty; the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will open for signature on September 20.
- The United States remains firmly opposed to this treaty, and we strongly urge your government not to sign it.
- The United States understands and appreciates states' desire to make more and faster progress on nuclear disarmament. Indeed, we share the desire to achieve a security environment that would make such progress possible.
- Unfortunately, the international security conditions to allow for such progress currently do not exist, and the ban treaty fails to address or take into account the security challenges that continue to make nuclear deterrence necessary.
- In addition, not a single Nuclear Weapon State participated in the negotiations or will sign the treaty.
- As a result, the treaty will not result in the elimination of a single nuclear weapon, and it will not enhance the security of any state.
- Instead, it risks having the opposite effect, reinforcing divisions in the existing nonproliferation and disarmament bodies that could hinder our ability to work together to address the pressing proliferation and security challenges we face.
- Treaty negotiations are incredibly difficult and complex, and it is clear the ban treaty was written in a rushed process that resulted in a deeply flawed text. The treaty contains many provisions that are vague and ill-defined, with unclear but potentially serious impacts on cooperation in many areas, including security, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- Proponents of the ban treaty have insisted that the treaty will not conflict with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone of the global nonproliferation regime. However, the text itself undermines that argument. Article 18 of the treaty makes clear that, in the event of a conflict between the NPT and the ban treaty, the ban treaty will prevail among states party to it.
- Article 3 of the ban treaty would turn the clock back on critical steps taken to strengthen IAEA safeguards since the NPT entered into force by setting a lower verification standard that is not designed to deal with clandestine nuclear programs. The Additional Protocol has become the de facto standard for nonproliferation safeguards under the NPT, but is left out of the ban treaty.
- Any serious nuclear disarmament treaty requires rigorous and clear mechanisms for verification.
- The ban treaty defers any serious consideration of verification for resolution in the future, with undefined requirements and through undefined mechanisms. This is a fundamental flaw and runs contrary to decades of experience on what is required for actual progress on nuclear disarmament.
- The notion that the ban treaty might provide a framework for future disarmament steps is wishful thinking.

- The United States is fully committed to the NPT and to meeting its obligations under the Treaty, including Article VI. There can be no question about our commitment to pursue effective measures for nuclear disarmament when the security conditions allow.
- That commitment is manifested by the fact that we have reduced our stockpile by more than 87 percent since its Cold War heights, and by the fact that we remain on course to meet the central limits of the New START Treaty when they take effect in February 2018, which will result in the lowest stockpiles since the 1950s.
- We will continue to work with all states through existing, consensus-based fora to advance our common interest in addressing the nonproliferation and security challenges we face. We urge all states to reject the ban treaty and other approaches that will only distract from that work.
- Throughout this process, proponents of the ban treaty have insisted that this effort was not meant to detract from the NPT and would not conflict with or undermine that treaty. However, simply stating this does not necessarily make it so.
- The United States remains committed to the NPT and to meeting its obligations under that treaty, including under Article VI. We know your government is also committed to its obligations under the NPT, and we hope we can count on that continued commitment. We look forward to continuing to work with you through the NPT review process and in other fora to address the pressing proliferation and security challenges facing our countries and to improve the international security environment in ways that could allow for further progress on disarmament.
- It would be unfortunate if the ban treaty – which is and will remain divisive in the international community – were allowed to distract from or derail that important work. We urge your government to ensure that does not happen.