

Statement of Bruce I. Turner
Nominee for the Rank of Ambassador During His Tenure of Service as Permanent U.S.
Representative to the Conference on Disarmament
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
May 4, 2022

Thank you, Madam Chair and Members of the Committee.

It is the honor of a lifetime to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, or CD, in Geneva. I am also grateful to Secretary Blinken and Under Secretary Jenkins for their support of this new opportunity to serve the American people.

My parents understood what it meant to serve our country during World War II. Similarly, my wife Veronique has been at my side every step of our State Department journey, and our children, Hadrien and Alixe, grew up in the Foreign Service family.

In seeking confirmation for this position, I am acutely aware of the CD's illustrious history in producing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I am also aware that we have failed to gain the support of critical countries for negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty – the next logical step. Unfortunately, some of the arms control treaties negotiated in the CD are effectively under assault. Most recently, Russia – a States Party that has used chemical weapons and has an offensive program – is making unfounded accusations that Ukraine plans to use chemical weapons in Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. Russia's nuclear rhetoric in connection with its invasion of Ukraine is recklessly escalatory and hard to reconcile with President Putin's endorsement of the statement by the leaders of the P5 – the five nuclear-weapon states that are permanent members of the UN Security Council – in January that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

Growing strategic competition -- encompassing Russia's history of arms control violations and China's repeated unwillingness to engage meaningfully in arms control discussions as it builds up its nuclear forces -- has caused some to question the value of such agreements. Russia's most recent actions and the PRC's tacit, and, in some cases, overt support for them, have rendered the challenge even more daunting. These developments only underscore the continuing need for American engagement and leadership.

Given the stakes, we can only redouble our efforts, as we continue to protect our security and that of our allies and partners: Russia is still complying with the New START Treaty. Through the P5, the PRC acknowledged the need for engagement with the United States on risk reduction and a dialogue to strengthen stability.

I believe the coming year does offer further opportunities to exert U.S. leadership. If confirmed, I would hope to contribute to a positive outcome of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference later this year. Nonproliferation remains a core national security interest. It is the key to pursuing the eventual goal of a world without nuclear weapons, understanding that

progress must take into account today's challenging security conditions, and that it can only proceed through progressive steps, subject to effective verification.

If confirmed, I will also seek to contribute to our successful efforts in the UN General Assembly's First Committee to reinforce and strengthen international arms control and nonproliferation cooperation, including increased international support for development of norms of behavior in space. The United States is already leading the way through its ban on anti-satellite testing.

I would also seek to build upon the Geneva diplomatic platform offered by the standing delegation to the CD, which has supported a variety of arms control and international security efforts, to include those of Deputy Secretary Sherman and Under Secretary Jenkins in the U.S.-Russia Strategic Stability Dialogue.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has a distinguished and successful history of supporting arms control efforts, on a bipartisan basis. If confirmed, I commit to be available to consult closely with this committee and other Members of Congress, as well as their staffs.

In working to achieve our long-term nuclear disarmament and other arms control objectives, I believe 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, while always protecting the security interests of the United States and its allies and partners.

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

Thank you.