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COMMUNICAITON RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REGARDING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

On 14 March 1980 the Director General received a note dated 10 March from the Resident Representative of the United States of America requesting the communication to Agency Members of a statement released by the White House on 5 March in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.[1] The text of the statement is reproduced below.

"Today is the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For the past decade this treaty has admirably served the causes of international peace and technical progress in the nuclear field and has become the cornerstone of US Non-Proliferation Policy.

The primary purpose of the NPT is to reduce the likelihood of nuclear war by preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. No non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT has in the past decade acquired nuclear explosives, despite the fact that some had the technological capability to do so. The treaty has enhanced international security by diminishing regional tensions, preempting regional nuclear arms races, and diminishing the role of nuclear weapons as symbols of national prestige.

The NPT has provided an important structure for the international transfer of peaceful nuclear technology. Concern over the spread of nuclear weapons capabilities could significantly limit international co-operation in this field if there were no reliable method to ensure that civil nuclear technology would not be diverted to military purposes. Through a commitment to the Safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, NPT adherence helps provide assurance that civil nuclear technology is used for legitimate peaceful purposes. Further assurances will be provided by the International Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, which the United States signed on March 3.

[1] Reproduced in document INFCIRC/140.

The NPT contains provisions that obligate all of its 113 parties, and in particular the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, to pursue effective nuclear arms control. Since the Treaty's entry into force, the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed to the ABM Treaty and the Salt I Interim Agreement, and the Salt II Treaty has been signed. We are continuing negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

In August of this year, the NPT adherents will meet in Geneva to review the operation of the treaty over its first decade. The US looks forward to working with these States to strengthen the NPT regime, to urge additional States to adhere to the treaty, and to under-score our shared commitment to controlling nuclear weapons and preventing their proliferation."