Thank you, Fred, and thank you to the staff here at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) for hosting me. It is great to be here today. It was just over 50 years ago that tension brought on by the Cuban Missile Crisis threatened to turn the Cold War hot. To say that things have changed dramatically since October 1962 is an understatement. It was just eight years later that the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was in force.

A Grand Bargain

The grand bargain of the NPT set an enduring standard that is as relevant today as it was at the Treaty’s inception. Despite our past successes, there are very pressing challenges all around us and on the horizon. Most critically, we have grave concerns about the actions of a few countries. North Korea, Iran and Syria have failed to live up to their NPT obligations and have failed to take the steps necessary to rectify these violations. The United States is gravely concerned about all of these issues, as I am sure is the case for everyone in this room. These transgressions threaten international security and undermine confidence in the nonproliferation regime. These cases also stand directly in the way of our shared disarmament goals. So how do we plan to address the threats we face, while moving forward with President Obama’s ambitious Prague Agenda?

Nonproliferation Priorities

On the nonproliferation front, the main priority is and will remain addressing compliance challenges. NPT rules must be binding and there must be consequences for those who break them. We are also helping to push for universal adherence to the IAEA safeguards agreements and Additional Protocols. We have made excellent progress over the past few years, but we must continue to press for more countries to bring the Additional Protocols into force.

An important goal we share with the international community is the achievement of a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. The United States stands ready to help facilitate discussions among states in the region at the proposed Helsinki conference. The United States continues to fully support this goal. But we do so recognizing that the mandate for a zone can only come from within the region; it cannot be imposed from outside or without the consent of all concerned states. We regret the Helsinki conference could not be convened last year, but remain committed to working with our partners and the states in the region to create conditions for a successful dialogue.

Another immediate concern is securing vulnerable nuclear materials in order to keep them out of the hands of terrorists. Under President Obama’s direction, we have held two Nuclear Security Summits, with a third to take place in The Hague next year. In anticipation of the Hague Summit in 2014, we will continue to build on pledges that are resulting in more material secured, removed and eliminated. The United States is also working to update the legal framework for cooperative threat reduction (CTR) activities with the Russian Federation. We have been working closely with Russia over the past year to continue our cooperation under an updated legal framework that reflects our maturing bilateral partnership and allows us to build on the achievements made under the expiring CTR agreement. It was these talks that brought me to Geneva this week, and I am glad to tell you that they are proceeding apace with our Russian counterparts.

The past success of CTR gives us a lot to be proud of and we aim to continue this success. Like President Obama said, “missile by missile, warhead by warhead, shell by shell, we’re putting a bygone era behind us.” We are working hard to continue U.S.-Russian cooperation in nonproliferation and arms control.

Arms Control Priorities

Regarding the disarmament agenda, there have been successes on both the bilateral and multilateral fronts. The United States is committed to a step-by-step process to reduce the overall numbers of nuclear weapons. The second anniversary of the New START Treaty’s entry into force has just passed. As many of you
know, I was the lead New START negotiator for the United States and it is very satisfying to see how pragmatic, business-like and positive the implementation is proceeding. We are now exploring what a future agreement with Russia might look like — and how to include all categories of nuclear weapons — strategic, non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed.

Beyond bilateral treaties, ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a top priority for the United States. As stated in the April 2010 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review: “Ratification of the CTBT is central to leading other nuclear weapons states toward a world of diminished reliance on nuclear weapons, reduced nuclear competition, and eventual nuclear disarmament.” As we look towards ratification of this Treaty, we acknowledge that the process will not be easy. That said, the New START ratification process helped to reinvigorate interest in the topic of nuclear weapons and arms control on Capitol Hill. I am optimistic that interest will continue as we engage with Members and staff on the CTBT.

I like to think of our efforts thus far as an “information exchange.” There are no set timeframes to bring the Treaty to a vote, and we are going to be patient, but we will also be persistent. While we pursue ratification at home, the Administration has been calling on the remaining Annex 2 States to join us in moving forward toward ratification. There is no reason to wait on us. An in-force CTBT benefits all nations. We also remain committed to launching negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT). An FMCT is a logical and absolutely essential next step in the path towards global nuclear disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains our preferred venue for negotiating an FMCT, since it includes every major nuclear-capable state and operates by consensus. Nonetheless, we are more concerned with getting negotiations started than we are with the venue. So long as our principles are met, that negotiations be governed by consensus and include the key states, we are prepared to move forward.

We will also continue to press this issue. Our focus has been to find a way to convince the skeptics that commencement of negotiations is not something to fear. Consensus-based negotiations allow all to protect their vital national security interests. To those for whom the continued existence of the CD is vital, I say come to the negotiating table and get to work, while we still have a table from which to work.

One thing that I believe does not get the attention it probably should be our ongoing engagement with other P5 states on disarmament-related matters. Following the first meeting in London in 2009, P5 conferences were held in Paris in 2011 and Washington in 2012. At these high-level meetings, we started discussions on key nuclear weapons related issues, including confidence-building, transparency, and verification experiences. Russia will host the next P5 conference next month here in Geneva, just before the NPT PrepCom.

Some have asked why the P5 Parties were absent from the recent Oslo Conference on the “Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.” The United States did not take this decision lightly. It was only after careful consideration, and in close consultation with the rest of the P5, that we decided not to attend. Let me be clear, we fully understand the serious consequences of nuclear weapon use and will continue to give the highest priority to avoiding their use.

However, we were concerned that the Oslo Conference would divert discussion away from practical steps to create conditions for further nuclear weapons reductions. The practical, step-by-step approach that we have been taking proves to be the most effective means to increase stability and reduce nuclear dangers. This is the kind of approach we will continue to take.

Now, I have only highlighted some of our priorities, but we have a lot of other issues running now, as well. Tom Countryman, our Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, is leading the U.S. delegation to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) negotiations in New York City. The illicit trafficking of conventional arms is an important national security concern for the United States and it is crucial that we work toward an agreement that advances global security and respects national sovereignty and the legitimate arms trade. This is the message that Secretary of State Kerry underscored last Friday, just in advance of the talks. The July 26 draft ATT text offers a solid basis from which to work, but we believe it needs further review and refinement in order to meet the high standards of a treaty that we could sign and ratify. We look forward to cooperating with our partners to achieve a treaty text that can be adopted by consensus.

I also wanted to briefly update you on our recent changes to our missile defense program. In response to growing threats from North Korea and the continued advancements in Iran’s space launch and long-range missile capabilities, the United States is taking steps to ensure that our homeland missile defenses stay ahead of any threat from North Korea and Iran.

First, we will strengthen our homeland missile defense by increasing the number of deployed Ground Based Interceptors (GBIs) from 30 to 44. As mandated by the U.S. Congress, we will also explore the possibility of an additional GBI site on the east coast of the United States, though we have not made any decision to proceed with the development of an additional site. At the same time, we will restructure the SM-3 IIB program into a technology development program focused on further improving kill-vehicle reliability for missile defense interceptors, including both the GBI and the SM-3. Finally, with the support of the Japanese government, we are planning to deploy an additional [TPY-2] radar in Japan that will provide improved early warning and tracking of any missile launched from North Korea at the United States or Japan.

These combined steps serve to strengthen missile defenses for the protection of the U.S. homeland and our allies. Let me emphasize the strong and continued commitment of the United States to NATO missile defense. That commitment remains ironclad. Phase I through Phase III of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), including sites in Poland and Romania, will provide coverage to all European NATO territory, as planned by 2018.

Looking Ahead

I know that the road ahead can seem daunting, but we can now take advantage of some new tools. The United States is and has always been committed to innovation and the arms control and nonproliferation arenas are no exception. To respond to the challenges we face, we are thinking about creative ways to use technologies — including open source technologies — to tackle long-standing verification and monitoring problems. We hope that other states will join us in this endeavor. As I said, we have come a long way since the Cuban Missile Crisis, but we still have a long way to go. We just have to keep moving forward step by step.
Thank you and I look forward to your questions.