



## Opening Remarks of the United States at the IPNDV Annual Plenary Meeting Sydney, Australia - December 5, 2022

*Delivered by Under Secretary Bonnie Jenkins*

Good morning.

I am honored to be here today to help kickoff another substantive end of year plenary meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). I would like to thank the government of Australia for hosting this event, and each of you, for continuing to champion the IPNDV and its important work to advance the state of the art in nuclear disarmament. Your countries' commitment to the Partnership is why we are all here today.

Verification is the bedrock of effective and enduring nuclear disarmament, and the IPNDV plays an immeasurable role in advancing this work.

Since its creation eight years ago, the Partnership has succeeded in bringing together states with and without nuclear weapons to foster collaborative engagement on the technical verification challenges facing future nuclear disarmament and identifying potential solutions to those challenges. The Partnership has been a leader in the collaborative development of conceptual and practical understandings among nuclear weapon possessing and non-possessing States. And for that, we are all grateful.

I want to congratulate each of you and your colleagues who, despite the challenges over the past years related to the COVID-19 pandemic, have continued the important work of the Partnership. The series of exercises and technical demonstrations the Partnership has conducted over the past two years, including this year's JUNEX tabletop exercise in Belgium, have allowed for rigorous examination of the various processes, procedures, techniques, and technologies developed in the earlier phases of your work. As a result, the Partnership has produced an impressive and valuable toolkit that can strengthen future arms control regimes by exploring realistic and effective verification mechanisms to help address complex verification challenges associated with nuclear disarmament.

In particular, this year's JUNEX tabletop exercise contributed to valuable thinking on the transport and long-term storage of nuclear warheads through a realistic scenario informed by technical experts and global perspectives. The Partnership's ongoing efforts to assess its previous work on nuclear weapon dismantlement is crucial, and I am certain that the IPNDV's conceptual framework will play an important role in future disarmament verification efforts.

The IPNDV's work is especially important today given Russia's dangerous nuclear rhetoric amid its illegal and unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the PRC's unfettered build-up of its





nuclear arsenal, and the DPRK's ongoing development of its nuclear arsenal and launch of an unprecedented number of ballistic missiles, including seven ICBMs and ballistic missiles it alleges are intended for the operation of tactical nuclear weapons. All of these actions strain the international security environment in ways not seen in decades. Not since the early days of the Cold War have concerns of an arms race or nuclear escalation been more salient.

We are living in a perilous time, but it is also a time for persistence, creativity, and determination. The events of the past year have highlighted the critical need for multilateralism and de-escalation. They have also underscored the importance of effective nuclear disarmament verification. Without question, new, innovative verification procedures and technologies will play an essential role in any future nuclear disarmament agreements. As we in the United States, together with our partners and allies, continue to navigate the challenges associated with future nuclear disarmament, we recognize the importance of innovative thinking in this space. We value the IPNDV's commitment to developing solutions to these enduring challenges through a collaborative, multilateral and multidisciplinary approach.

We should all be proud of the role the IPNDV has had in advancing progress toward a world without nuclear weapons.

Before I conclude, I would be remiss not to mention the value of the efforts to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility across arms control and nonproliferation world. Sitting here before a room filled with the women and men from all over the world who have worked tirelessly over years to advance the vital work of the IPNDV, I am reminded of the progress we have made in advocating for women's representation. As we manage today's challenges, we must continue our commitment to gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity.

I will leave you with this. While it can be challenging to conceptualize at times, the IPNDV's consistent and effective work will undoubtedly aid in our collective fight to reduce current nuclear dangers and facilitate future arms control and disarmament efforts. Thank you for all that you do. Congratulations on what has been a productive three years, and I look forward to what comes next.

Thank you.

