

APPENDIX 1

Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty **A chronology**

compiled by Lauren Barbour

December 1946: The U.N. Atomic Energy Commission's first annual report to the Security Council recommends the establishment of an international agency whose duties would include providing for the disposal of fissile material stocks and guaranteeing that the "manufacture and possession" of atomic weapons is prohibited.

September 1947: The U.N. Atomic Energy Commission recommends a system of mining and processing controls under which all source materials are owned and managed by an international agency. The Soviet Union rejects the proposal, arguing that its geographical survey and inspection provisions violate national sovereignty.

December 8, 1953: U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivers his "Atoms for Peace" speech. He pledges to "seek more than the mere reduction or elimination of atomic materials for military purposes," and suggests that governments make "joint contributions from their stockpiles of normal uranium and fissionable materials to an international atomic energy agency."

May 1955: Harold Stassen, President Eisenhower's Special Assistant for Disarmament, concludes that the elimination of nuclear weapons is an "impractical goal," and that the control of nuclear weapons is contingent on effective inspections and a full accounting of the past production of nuclear material.

August 1957: U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles presents a paper to the subcommittee of the U.N. Disarmament Commission. This paper, representing the views of the United States, Canada, Britain, and France, proposes that "all future pro-

duction of fissionable material will be used under international supervision, exclusively for non-weapons purposes,” and that “the parties will undertake to provide, under international supervision, for equitable transfers, in successive increments, of fissionable material from previous production to non-weapons purposes.” The Soviet Union takes the position that prohibiting fissile material production is meaningless unless nuclear weapons are banned as well.

December 1957: Over the Soviet Union’s objections, the General Assembly adopts a U.S.-drafted resolution encouraging member states to consider a disarmament agreement that includes “the cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes.” This is the first U.N. General Assembly resolution that specifically addresses a fissile material cutoff.

May 1958: Britain, France, and the United States propose a draft agenda for a superpower summit with the Soviet Union. The first proposed topic of discussion is a fissile material cutoff.

Early 1960s: A nuclear weapons test ban replaces a fissile material cutoff as the central U.S. disarmament issue.

1964: U.S. President Lyndon Johnson proposes to the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament both a freeze of the nuclear arms race and a separate fissile material cutoff agreement, beginning with a measure for verified production-facility closings. Later in the year, the United States, Soviet Union, and Britain all unilaterally cut the production of fissile materials intended for weapons programs. The United States announces that it plans to reduce plutonium production by 20 percent and enriched uranium production by 40 percent over a four-year period. President Johnson says that “even in the absence of an agreement we must not stockpile arms beyond our needs or seek an excess military power that could be provocative as well as wasteful.” The Soviet Union decides to discontinue the construction of two plutonium production reactors, to slow weapon-grade uranium production, and to dedicate more fissile

materials to civilian nuclear purposes. The United States ceases production of highly enriched uranium (HEU) for weapons purposes.

1965: The United States submits a working paper on a complete fissile material cutoff to the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament; it contains proposals for non-intrusive verification and the conversion of 100,000 kilograms of U.S. and Soviet fissile material to peaceful purposes. The Soviet Union rejects this plan because it lacks prohibitions on weapons production.

1966: The United States presents three more working papers to the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament. These papers include proposals for the transfer of materials from dismantled weapons, inspection systems for closed production facilities, and permanent reactor shutdowns.

1969: U.S. President Richard Nixon lists a fissile material cutoff as an item that the United States will pursue during the Geneva meetings of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. The United States intends to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and verification on facilities affected by a cutoff treaty, replacing the proposed “adversary inspections” the Soviet Union found so contentious in earlier proposals. The United States also says that in the context of a cutoff agreement, the nuclear weapon states should accept the same safeguards as the non-nuclear weapon states do under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). These initiatives are again opposed by the Soviet Union; however, the United States gains support among the non-aligned. Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) begin.

March 1970: The NPT enters into force.

May 1978: At the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau outlines a four-point “Strategy of Suffocation” aimed at ending the nuclear arms race. A fissile material cutoff treaty is among its provisions. The con-

ference's final document calls for "cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes."

Fall 1978: Canada proposes a resolution to the U.N. General Assembly asking the Committee on Disarmament (CD) to consider "an adequately verified cessation and prohibition of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and other nuclear explosive devices." The Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact states oppose the resolution because it does not include an end to nuclear weapons production. The United States and Britain are less enthusiastic about a fissile material cutoff than in previous years, but nonetheless vote for the resolution.

1979: Canada proposes a resolution, similar to the one offered in 1978, urging the CD to consider a fissile material cutoff. The proposal gains further support in the General Assembly.

Early 1980s: The nuclear freeze movement generates renewed interest in a fissile material cutoff as an arms control measure. Nongovernmental groups undertake research efforts to determine the size of military fissile material inventories and the verification requirements of a fissile material cutoff agreement.

June 15, 1982: In a speech to the Second U.N. Special Session on Disarmament, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko proposes that a "cessation of production of fissionable materials for manufacturing nuclear weapons" be a part of the initial stages of a disarmament program.

April 26, 1986: In the aftermath of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, the public increasingly views U.S. and Soviet plutonium production reactors as posing unacceptable environmental and safety risks. Public support for a plutonium cutoff grows significantly, particularly in the United States.

1988: The production reactors at the Savannah River facility in South Carolina are shut down for safety reasons, effectively ending the U.S. production of plutonium.

April 7, 1989: Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev announces that the Soviet Union has decided to cease production of weapon-grade uranium; in addition to the plutonium production reactor closed in 1987, two other production reactors are to be shut down.

July 27, 1989: The U.S. House of Representatives approves the Wyden amendment to the Defense Department's Budget Authorization for fiscal 1990 and 1991 (H.R. 2461). This amendment urges the president to negotiate a U.S.-Soviet ban on the production of plutonium and HEU for weapons purposes.

September 26, 1989: In his address to the U.N. General Assembly, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze supports a "verifiable cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes."

1991: U.S. President George Bush's Middle East peace initiative calls for states in the region to agree to a ban on the production of nuclear-weapons materials.

January 1992: Russian President Boris Yeltsin reiterates Gorbachev's offer to negotiate a bilateral fissile material cutoff. Russia announces that it will cease weapon-grade plutonium production by 2000 whether or not an agreement is reached.

July 13, 1992: President Bush announces a broad nonproliferation initiative that includes an end to the production of "plutonium or highly enriched uranium for nuclear explosive purposes."

September 27, 1993: U.S. President Bill Clinton proposes a framework for U.S. nonproliferation efforts, including fissile material controls. The United States, he says, will:

- seek to eliminate where possible the accumulation of stockpiles of HEU or plutonium;

- propose a multilateral convention prohibiting the production of HEU or plutonium for nuclear explosive purposes or outside of international safeguards;
- encourage more restrictive regional arrangements to constrain fissile-material production in regions of instability and high proliferation risk;
- submit U.S. fissile material no longer needed for the deterrent to IAEA inspection;
- pursue the purchase of HEU from the former Soviet Union and other countries and its conversion to peaceful use as reactor fuel.

December 16, 1993: The U.N. General Assembly adopts a resolution (A/RES/48/75L) stating that “a non-discriminatory, multilateral, international, and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices would be a significant contribution to nuclear nonproliferation in all its aspects.” The resolution also asks the IAEA to “provide assistance for examination of the verification arrangements for such a treaty, as required.”

January 25, 1994: The CD decides to appoint a “Special Coordinator” to seek the views of members on the most appropriate arrangements to negotiate the type of fissile material cutoff treaty requested by the U.N. General Assembly. Canadian Amb. Gerald Shannon is appointed Special Coordinator.

June 1994: Ambassador Shannon announces that consensus exists among the Conference on Disarmament members that the CD is the appropriate forum for the negotiation of a cutoff treaty.

January 17–18, 1995: The Canadian government sponsors a workshop in Toronto on the political and technical aspects of a fissile material cutoff, including its scope and basic obligations.

March 23, 1995: The Conference on Disarmament agrees on a mandate, based on the 1993 U.N. General Assembly resolution:

- The CD decides to establish an ad hoc committee on a ban on

the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

- The CD directs the ad hoc committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty.
- The ad hoc committee is directed to report on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1995 session. (The committee did not meet. As a result, it did not produce a report.)

April-May 1995: At the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in New York, the state parties to the treaty agree on a program of action in the context of the effective implementation of Article VI, including the “immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations” of a fissile material cutoff in accordance with the CD’s mandate.

May 11 and 13, 1998: India conducts underground nuclear tests. Following these tests, India announces that it will be “happy to participate” in the fissile material cutoff treaty talks. Pakistan calls the talks “irrelevant.”

May 28 and 30, 1998: Pakistan conducts underground nuclear tests.

July 30, 1998: Pakistan announces that it will support the “immediate commencement of negotiations” on a fissile material cutoff treaty.

August 1998: The CD agrees to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and names Canadian Amb. Mark Moher chairman of the committee. Israel hesitates to allow the talks to begin but, under pressure from the United States, decides not to block them.

Sources: Warren H. Donnelly and David Cheney, “Proposals for Ending U.S. and Soviet Production of Fissile Materials for Nuclear Weapons,” *CRS Issue Brief*, Congressional Research Service, IB-89-

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