**Under Secretary of State Bonnie Jenkins**

**Remarks to the Conference on Disarmament**

**February 28, 2022**

Madame President, Secretary-General, and Distinguished Representatives – It is an honor and a privilege to be here before you today at the Conference on Disarmament, though I wish it was under better circumstances.

This year’s Conference on Disarmament will be overshadowed by the premeditated, unprovoked, and unjustified attack against Ukraine by Russia’s military forces.  As President Biden has said, President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that has brought a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering.  The United States condemns Russia’s unprovoked and massive further invasion of Ukraine.  Russia’s actions are in violation of international law and the global norms that we as an international community have all pledged to respect:  national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the right of states to make their own decisions regarding their foreign and security policy arrangements.

The implications of Russia’s decision to go to war with Ukraine will reverberate globally for the foreseeable future, affecting us all, including the work of this body.  The death and destruction that we’ve seen from Russia’s ongoing incursion will have devastating and far-reaching effects for not only the people of Ukraine.  European and global security is in jeopardy, and the benefits of the global economy for all of us put at risk because of Russia’s actions.

Distinguished Representatives, we must send a clear and collective message to Russia:  the territory of a sovereign state cannot be forcibly seized, no country has a veto over another’s security partners or political path, and military aggression disregarding a country’s territorial integrity will not be ignored.  There must be consequences for Russia’s unprovoked war.  We call on Russia to halt its military operations in Ukraine immediately, return its troops and equipment to Russia, and cease all further aggression against Ukraine.  We urge Russia, in the strongest possible terms, to choose the path of diplomacy.  The world is watching and we will hold Russia accountable.

Distinguished Representatives, today we should all ask ourselves why we are here at the CD and what is our purpose?

History has shown that success in arms control and disarmament efforts requires political will and good faith.  Fortunately, multilateral and international institutions, such as the Conference on Disarmament, offer a forum to work together even in the darkest times to address complex global challenges through dialogue and concerted action.

Deeply rooted in the United States’ Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and subsequent National Security Strategy is the Biden-Harris Administration’s view that we have a moral responsibility and national security imperative to manage and eventually eliminate the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.  This is no easy task and has only been made more challenging by Russia’s aggression.  It will take a concerted effort to bring this goal to reality. The United States will continue to pursue arms control measures in both bilateral and multilateral channels.  We also think it is past time to begin the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, or FMCT.

In 1995, this body took up a mandate to negotiate an effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.  More than twenty-five years later, that mandate remains unfulfilled.  My fellow distinguished Representatives, why have we allowed the FMCT to languish for so long?

As Secretary Blinken said in his statement to this body last year, “States developing anti-satellite weapons” should “refrain from dangerous testing of such systems.”  Unfortunately, despite Russia’s diplomatic and public pronouncements against the weaponization of space, Russia conducted a reckless ground-based destructive anti-satellite test in November 2021 that created space debris that risked astronauts' lives, the integrity of the International Space Station, and, yet again, the interests of all nations.  We must work together to prevent another such test by any nation.  So, today, I reiterate our call for all countries to refrain from such tests.  It is in all our security interests to focus on our shared priorities.  To that end, I urge the countries in this room to participate constructively in the Open-Ended Working Group on norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior in outer space so we can begin to address these critical threats to the outer space environment.

Madame President,

The people we represent are diverse.  Here in the CD, we should embrace diversity and facilitate inclusivity.  In that context, I emphasize our disappointment that the proposal to update the CD Rules of Procedure with gender inclusive “technical/linguistic changes” did not achieve consensus last year.  The participation and representation of women and gender-diverse persons in all levels of policymaking, planning, and implementation processes related to disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control needs to be facilitated.  We support efforts to find a way forward on this issue.  We also take this moment to recognize the brave women who have volunteered to take up arms in defense of Ukrainian sovereignty and reiterate the importance of Ukraine’s women to be involved in diplomatic negotiations.

The people we represent also expect us to reduce the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction and emerging threats.  This precarious moment in history only increases the urgency of the need for collective action to meet that expectation.

Now is the time, and we collectively can make the Conference on Disarmament live up to the purpose it was intended to serve as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for the international community.

So let’s get to work.