Statement by the G7 Non-Proliferation Directors Group

2021-04-19

1. The G7 is committed to working together and with our partners to build the conditions for a more secure, more stable, and safer world. In recent years, our efforts have been severely tested, by the increasing use of chemical weapons, rapidly evolving biological threats, destabilising transfer and deployment of conventional weapons, and targeted appropriation of emerging technology, as well as the growing threat of nuclear proliferation. States must stand together to meet these challenges, responsibly upholding their commitments, supporting action to hold those who fail to do so to account, and strengthening the key institutions which keep us all safe.

Transparency and Responsibility:

2. As G7 members we affirm our commitment to upholding the highest national standards in confronting counter-proliferation challenges, demonstrating this through transparency and openness in our practices. We plan to support states to improve their own standards, by sharing resources and expertise, and by delivering capacity-building and threat reduction assistance, including through the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP).

3. We are determined to prevent the illicit transfers and destabilising accumulation of conventional weapons and ammunition, and to increase the safety and security of stockpiles, including by deploying our technical expertise, sharing best practices and adhering to international law and norms on responsible transfer. We intend to advocate for the reinforcement of regimes that regulate the deployment and transfer, and prevent the diversion, of conventional weapons in line with international law and norms. We also commit to driving efforts to broaden membership in regimes, and to adapt, where necessary, relevant regimes as new technologies are developed. In dialogue with other technology leaders we seek to shape the global debate on responsible civilian and military use of new technologies, securing adherence to international law, including International Humanitarian Law and, where applicable, International Human Rights Law, while taking into account security and defence considerations. Where necessary, new international principles for responsible use should be considered.

4. The G7 affirms the importance of coordinated action to counter illegal intangible technology transfer, and protecting academia and business sectors from hostile state

exploitation. We intend to focus on mitigating the threat posed by the misuse and illicit diversion of sensitive technology in support of the development of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), their means of delivery and advanced military technology programmes by state and non-state actors. We commit similarly to collaborating in addressing challenges posed by dual-use research of concern (DURC) and promoting an environment in which science and technology advances and legitimate research collaboration can flourish. In this context, we intend to give special attention to monitoring and reducing potential biological threats associated with advances in technology and dual-use life sciences research by promoting global biosecurity and biosafety.

5. The G7 members commit to enhancing export controls on materials, technology and research that could be used to develop WMD and their means of delivery. We plan to strengthen controls on materials, technology and research that could support the development of advanced conventional weapons, ensuring enhancements are proportionate and avoid negatively impacting on legitimate exports. We intend to review the material and technology that we control, keeping pace with technological developments by supporting work to update multilateral export control regime lists, and ensuring measures and guidelines remain relevant. We also intend to share expertise to help other states counter such proliferation.

6. The G7 is committed to taking action to counter proliferation financing which, left unchecked, undermines the integrity of the global financial system and fuels threats to our common security. We, therefore, welcome the recent changes to the Financial Action Task Force standards, which, for the first time, expect all countries and regions to take concrete steps to understand the proliferation financing risks they face, and to oblige their financial sectors and designated non-financial business professions to do the same. Only by understanding the truly global reach of proliferation networks will we meet our responsibility to tackle this activity.

7. Threats to the secure and sustainable use of outer space are becoming more serious, as our societies become increasingly reliant on space systems for their security and prosperity. We are concerned about space activities that lack transparency including acts that threaten space systems both in space and on/from Earth. Establishing responsible behaviours could reduce the risk of miscalculation and avoid conflict in, to and from space. We are also concerned about tests of direct ascent anti-satellite capabilities that would generate orbital debris which endangers the sustainability of the space environment. We support the UK-led

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General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 75/36 on “Reducing Space Threats through norms, rules and principles of Responsible Behaviours” which aims to prevent irresponsible or threatening actions in outer space. We encourage states to respond to the

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Secretary General’s call to submit their ideas on the growing threats in space, the effects on the security of space systems, and how responsible space behaviours could mitigate the threats.

8. The G7 is resolved to increase political attention to the challenges of countering the threat of non-state actors acquiring nuclear and radioactive materials as weapons of terrorism and to accelerate national and international steps to manage the risks posed by such materials. We affirm our commitment to minimise Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) stocks globally, and encourage states with civil stocks of HEU to further reduce or eliminate them where economically and technically feasible. We support the universal adherence to and implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM). We therefore call on all states that have not yet done so to become a party to and fully implement these conventions. We call on all States Parties to participate in the upcoming A/CPPNM Review Conference to make it both substantive and reoccurring, as well as to submit information required by Article 14 prior to the Review Conference. We commit to continue to actively support the International Atomic Energy Agency (

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), the Nuclear Security Contact Group, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the UNSCR 1540 Committee to assist members to implement their national commitments that help enhance nuclear and radiological security.

9. The G7 commits to promote full implementation by all states of the highest standards of nuclear safety, security, and safeguards. This is expected to facilitate the safe and the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and thereby promote prosperity and address the

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Sustainable Development Goals.

10. We reaffirm the unique and valuable contributions of the G7-led GP. We intend to work to strengthen the GP’s capability to fulfil its core mission: to identify, develop, coordinate and implement projects which help prevent the misuse and/or proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and related materials. The COVID-19 pandemic – by highlighting the potential impact of large scale disease outbreaks – has indirectly demonstrated how disruptive a deliberate biological event could be. It thus reinforces the importance of effective and tangible actions worldwide to counter deliberate biological threats. Through the GP, we intend to work closely with African biosecurity partners to

develop and implement the GP’s biosecurity signature initiative, launched in 2020 under the U.S. GP Presidency, to take collective action to mitigate biological threats in Africa through strengthening biosecurity and biosafety; this will build on our 2015 Beyond Ebola Agenda and ongoing GP activities with African partners.The GP also plans to focus on revitalizing efforts to minimize HEU and to manage the risks associated with high-activity radiological sources.

Accountability and Compliance:

11. The G7 is determined to work together so that states that fail to act in accordance with their international obligations and commitments will face consequences. State-led threats pose a grave danger to our security and undermine prospects for more stable and prosperous world.

12. We therefore remain committed to permanently ensuring that Iran’s nuclear programme remains exclusively peaceful, in line with its NPT obligations and its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) never to seek, develop or acquire a nuclear weapon. We remain deeply concerned by Iran’s continued failure to implement its commitments under the JCPoA and its decision to significantly reduce transparency and co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (

IAEA

). These actions seriously undermine the non-proliferation benefits of the JCPoA. We urge Iran to return to its JCPoA commitments, and toward that end we welcome and support the ongoing talks in Vienna seeking a mutual return to compliance with the JCPoA.

13. We strongly urge Iran to uphold and fully implement all its obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreements with the

IAEA

. We further urge Iran to co-operate with the

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on all outstanding safeguards issues in a complete and timely manner, and express our strong support for the crucial monitoring and verification mandate of the

IAEA

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14. We have serious concerns about Iran’s missile programme, including Iran’s Space Launch Vehicle (SLV) programme, which Iran has continued to develop in spite of the provisions in United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231 that limit transfers to

Iran of missile technologies and call upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles “designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons,” including launches using such ballistic missile technology. Iran’s SLV programme is enabling it to test technology that is essential to the development of ballistic missiles, including future long-range delivery systems. We urge Iran to cease these activities and fully abide by all provisions in UNSCR 2231. We remain concerned about Iran’s destabilising activity around the Middle East, including continued transfers of missiles, missile technology as well as conventional arms to state and non-state actors, which is inconsistent with the relevant UNSCRs. Such proliferation is destabilising for the region and escalates already high tensions. We are equally troubled by Iran’s compliance record with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and call on Iran to abide by its obligations under the CWC.

15. We remain committed to the goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation and dismantlement of all of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) unlawful WMD and ballistic missiles in accordance with relevant

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Security Council resolutions, and call for the DPRK to return at an early date to the NPT and to

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safeguards. We are deeply concerned that the DPRK continues to develop its illicit ballistic missile programme, to include testing a variety of short-range missiles. In this regard, we condemn the recent launches of ballistic missiles on 25 March 2021 in violation of the relevant UNSC resolutions. They threaten regional peace and security and pose a serious challenge to the international community. We are concerned that the DPRK considers itself no longer bound by its moratorium on nuclear and long range ballistic missiles testing. Continued secondary proliferation also remains a source of major concern. We reiterate that the DPRK will never be accepted as a nuclear power. We strongly support the

IAEA

’s intensified efforts to enhance its readiness to play its essential role in monitoring and verifying the DPRK’s nuclear programme.

16. It is critical that sanctions which target the DPRK’s unlawful weapons development remain in place while its programmes exist. We call on all states to meet their sanctions obligations under the relevant UNSCRs, and welcome the accelerated process for humanitarian exemptions. We note the continued obligation on all states to repatriate DPRK overseas workers in a manner consistent with their international obligations and to declare all oil and refined petroleum shipments to the DPRK. We reiterate the importance of states

monitoring vigilantly for sanctions evading activities and to support the work of the Panel of Experts and the 1718 Committee. We call on the DPRK to refrain from provocations and to commit to engaging in dialogue.

17. We are determined to uphold the global norm against the use of chemical weapons and support the full implementation of the CWC. Together with other States Parties, we are committed to the Convention, and we support the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (

OPCW

) in its work to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone for any reason is unacceptable. There can be no impunity for chemical weapons use. We intend to consider all tools at our disposal to hold those responsible to account, including sanctions where appropriate. We reiterate the GP's commitment to take tangible action to mitigate current and future CW threats, including through support to further strengthen the

OPCW

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18. We welcome the

OPCW

Executive Council decision "Understanding Regarding the Aerosolised Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes" (EC-96/DEC.7/11 March 2021) that recommends that the Conference of States Parties (CSP) at its Twenty-Sixth Session decide that the aerosolised use of CNS-acting chemicals is understood to be inconsistent with law enforcement purposes as a "purpose not prohibited" under the Convention.

19. Syria's chemical weapons use, as well as its other violations of the CWC, are a matter of grave concern. In close cooperation with our partners we intend to pursue action at the CWC Conference of States Parties (CSP) to suspend Syria's rights and privileges under the CWC, until it completes the steps set out in the

OPCW

Executive Council Decision of 9 July 2020. We are committed to supporting the

OPCW

Technical Secretariat's work in investigating reports of chemical weapons use in Syria, identifying those responsible, and ensuring Syria's chemical weapons programme declaration is full and accurate; we intend to hold Syria to account for any failures to meet its obligations. We commit to pushing for the full implementation of UNSCR 2118, to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons programme once and for all. We also call on Syria to remedy its longstanding NPT and

IAEA

safeguards non-compliance.

20. The G7 reaffirms the statement made by Ministers on January 26 condemning in the strongest possible terms the poisoning of Mr. Alexey Navalny in August 2020 with a military grade chemical nerve-agent of the "Novichok" group, a substance developed by the Soviet Union, and later by Russia. The Russian government has provided no plausible account which contradicts the involvement of Russian state actors. We recall that the

OPCW

concluded that a similar nerve-agent was used in Salisbury in 2018. We again urge the Russian authorities to investigate and credibly explain the use of a chemical weapon on its soil in the light of Russia's obligations under the CWC. We support the statement made by 58 States Parties at the November CSP calling on Russia to account for the use of a chemical weapon on its territory. We regret the withdrawal of Russia's request for

OPCW

technical assistance and continue to urge Russia to disclose the circumstances of this incident. We welcome actions, such as sanctions, taken by G7 members in response to those individuals and entities deemed to be involved in the development and use of chemical weapons. We reaffirm our support for democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Russia, as well as to bolstering our support to Russian civil society.

Strengthening Institutions through Improved Implementation:

21. The G7 supports the vital role of international institutions in promoting a safe, secure, and stable world, and is committed to strengthening them in order to meet emerging challenges, including through the GP. The G7 is also committed to having gender equality integrated throughout these institutions' work, and to supporting global efforts to enhance education and professional development in the field of non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament.

22. The G7 reaffirms its commitment to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, achieved through concrete, practical steps. We underline the essential role of the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and

the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The G7 priority is to have a meaningful outcome at the NPT Review Conference in August 2021 that will comprehensively strengthen the treaty including by promoting universalisation, reinforce the importance of commitments made in past NPT Review Conferences and advance the treaty's implementation across all three of its mutually-reinforcing pillars.

23. We champion the NPT as a common platform for both nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states to pursue common aspirations, build trust and protect our citizens. The G7 welcomes diplomatic pathways that offer real progress in advancing the universal goals of the NPT by taking practical steps together, as promoted through initiatives such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, the Stockholm initiative on nuclear disarmament, and Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament. The G7 also welcomes efforts by G7 Nuclear Weapons States to promote effective measures, such as strategic and nuclear risk reduction and transparency measures on their postures and doctrines, which are conducive toward progress on disarmament under the NPT. The G7 States are concerned by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and its potential negative implications for the collaborative engagement necessary to strengthen the NPT. We call on all NPT states parties to work with us to strengthen the NPT as the irreplaceable foundation and framework for our common efforts.

24. The G7 is committed to, and underlines the importance of, early negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, and other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of consensus and with the participation of all countries relevant to a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). The conclusion of an FMCT would constitute a core element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this context, we remain convinced that the appropriate venue to negotiate such an instrument is the Conference on Disarmament, and regret that objections are currently preventing talks from proceeding. Pending that, we call on all states that have not yet done so to declare and observe voluntary moratoria on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. We are united in our resolve to promote the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We underline the need to bring the treaty into force and we support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Preparatory Commission, including the International Data Centre and International Monitoring System. The G7 is committed to working towards effective measures for strategic and nuclear risk reduction, and the development of multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capabilities.

25. The G7 has long been a champion of the security benefits that arms control can provide. We welcome the extension of New

START

and are glad to see its effective verification mechanism, as well as its limitations on nuclear arsenals, continue. But, in a worsening security environment, we have seen China modernising and growing its nuclear arsenal and Russia developing and deploying new nuclear weapons systems not covered by any arms control agreement, and some systems deployed contrary to Russia's past obligations. Building on the spirit of cooperation fostered by the extension of New

START

, we support and encourage wider efforts to address these new arms control challenges. We are committed to effective and verifiable arms control that enhances stability, transparency, and predictability while reducing the risks of costly, dangerous arms races.

26. The G7 intends to push for the universalisation of key safeguards agreements including Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, the Additional Protocol, and, where applicable, the revised Small Quantities Protocol, which represent the de facto safeguards standard under the NPT. Recalling our strong support for the professional and impartial work of the

IAEA

, the G7 underscores the importance of strengthening the effectiveness and optimizing the efficiency of the international safeguards system and ensuring it remains fits for purpose in the 21st century. To this end, we intend to consider recommendations for further improvements to the safeguards system.

27. We reaffirm the

IAEA

's central role in strengthening cooperation in nuclear security and the commitments in the Ministerial Declaration of the

IAEA

's International Conference on Nuclear Security in 2020. We support the

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in facilitating the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies in a safe, secure, and sustainable manner, including through aiding the development of new regulatory frameworks for the deployment of next generation technologies such as small modular reactors. We encourage all Member States, who are in a position to do so, to make financial and/or technical contributions to enable the

IAEA

to continue its work.

28. States engaged in nuclear activities should accede and adhere to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency and work towards their full implementation.

29. We remain gravely concerned by the accelerating proliferation of ballistic and other missile technologies, including at the hands of non-state actors, which is a threat to regional and global security. We call on all states to unilaterally adhere to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines and reiterate the importance of the fundamental principles underpinning ballistic missile non-proliferation including in accordance with UNSCR 1540. We strongly support the universalisation of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC) as a transparency and confidence building measure that encourages responsible behaviour and restraint in the development, testing and deployment of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, and aims to curb and prevent proliferation of such ballistic missiles. We call on all

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Member States to provide information to

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mechanisms relevant to implementing UNSCR 1540, including the UNSCR 1540 national reporting “matrices,” which track missile-related and all other national legal-regulatory measures designed to prevent WMD proliferation and their means of delivery.

30. We applaud the professionalism and integrity of the

OPCW

in fulfilling its vital role and strongly condemn those who seek to impede its investigations and undermine its work through baseless attacks and disinformation. Together with our partners, the G7 intends to work to see that the

OPCW

is equipped to fulfil its mandate, including through funding to

OPCW

programmes for important initiatives such as the Chemical Technology Centre. We commit to support

OPCW

efforts to increase its resilience to threats, including malicious cyber activity. We plan to galvanise international support for the organisation’s budget to reflect what the

OPCW

needs to fulfil its mission to include its CW attribution efforts in Syria.

31. The G7 intends to step up efforts to counter the threat of disease being used as a weapon. The G7 urges all states to work together to achieve universal adherence to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and to strengthen the Convention in order to meet emerging biological threats and address new developments in science and technology. We intend to work towards a successful Review Conference and intersessional programme which will promote effective implementation, strengthened confidence-building measures, voluntary initiatives and assistance to States Parties.

32. We commit to continue supporting the United Nations Secretary-General’s Mechanism to investigate alleged uses of chemical, biological or toxin weapons, resisting any attempts by opponents seeking to curtail its independence. It is the only agreed international mechanism mandated to investigate alleged uses of biological weapons. We commit to cooperate with partners so that the mechanism is properly resourced and fully prepared to conduct effective investigations when needed.

33. The G7 supports the effective implementation of UNSCR 1540. The upcoming 1540 Comprehensive Review is an opportunity to improve implementation, strengthen processes to inform the actions of the 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts, and enhance the effectiveness of the Global Trust Fund-sponsored 1540 capacity-building activities. We likewise encourage all states to fully implement the resolution and to offer assistance to interested states.

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