



Permanent Mission of Italy to the  
Conference on Disarmament

**Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)  
Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th Review Conference  
Geneva, 22 July – 2 August 2024**

**Right of Reply in the context of the General Debate  
Ambassador Leonardo Bencini  
Head of the Delegation of Italy  
24 July 2024**

Thank you Chair.

I have asked for the floor to exercise Italy's right of reply in relation to affirmations made by Iran and other delegations on nuclear sharing arrangements.

As usual, we reply that these arrangements are fully consistent with both Articles I and II of the NPT, since the United States retains full custody and control over its nuclear weapons deployed in Europe. There has been no transfer of nuclear weapons whatsoever and Italy remains a non-nuclear weapon State according to the NPT.

And this is from a legal point of view.

Now, from a historical point of view.

We would like to humbly suggest to those delegations that made remarks about these arrangements to look up the history of the NPT, especially the many interesting articles on the negotiation process in the 60s. There is plenty of literature on this issue we would be happy to share it with those delegations, should this be of their interest.

These arrangements were known at the time, in fact The NPT was negotiated taking into account NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements. They were part of the general understanding on a Non-proliferation treaty, and were discussed and accepted by the Soviet Union and then by other signatories.

No one objected to these arrangements during the negotiations. No one objected to these arrangements upon signing and ratifying the treaty. No one objected to these arrangements for decades, at each of the first nine review conferences.

Then, in 2015, Russia raised this issue for the first time, a year after its annexation of Crimea and the invasion of the eastern regions of Ukraine in 2014. And perhaps this is not a coincidence.

Unfortunately, other delegations adopted this historically inaccurate and legally unfounded position. We call on those delegations to consult the historical record and review their position accordingly.

Finally, a political-historical consideration. Far from being in violation of the NPT, nuclear sharing arrangements have provided an element of stability to the NPT since its inception. Not only are they in full legal compliance with the NPT, they have also been for decades and remain beneficial to the NPT.

This is because they provide Allies with security guarantees that reduce incentives for states to develop their own nuclear capabilities. This is easy enough for everyone to understand. These arrangements remove incentives for countries under the umbrella to develop nuclear deterrence of their own.

Nuclear sharing arrangements have prevented nuclear proliferation so they have contributed and still contribute to one of the Treaty's main goals.

I thank you chair.