

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 15 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative of
the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to
the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the United States national statement in response to the briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) on 29 April 2020 (see annex). The United States requests that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Kelly Craft**
Ambassador

United States Representative to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 15 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

National statement of the United States of America in response to the briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#)

The United States thanks the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) for his briefing and for his continued leadership of the Committee. We are especially grateful for his efforts and the efforts of the Committee's Group of Experts to ensure that the Committee's work continues in spite of the constraints posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including to terrorists and other non-State actors, remains a very serious threat, and our efforts to address it must endure.

We applaud the Chair's collaboration with the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. Their combined, steadfast work to support the effective implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) has made a substantial contribution to State-level progress since the last comprehensive review, in 2016.

As we look towards the next comprehensive review, to be completed by April 2021, the United States would like to commend the Chair's effort to improve 1540 reporting among States. We are especially pleased to receive in his briefing and other statements the considerable volume of reporting on the Committee's participation in regional activities focused on 1540 implementation. This level of detail allows other States to better understand how information from these activities can be useful in shaping their own implementation objectives. This robust reporting can help States identify available assistance-related resources and thereby better focus their assistance requests. This in turn enables the Committee to more effectively identify appropriate assistance providers.

We welcome the Chair's emphasis on the growing list of national points of contact for resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#). The points of contact enhance States' interactions with the Committee and, as the Chair notes in his briefing, foster more effective internal inter-agency coordination within States in their implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#). These points of contact, once fully stood up, represent an important and as yet largely untapped implementation resource. In order to promote and enhance the network of points of contact, the United States has joined with other donors, including fellow contributors to the Office for Disarmament Affairs trust fund for global and regional disarmament activities, to support the Office's development of a 1540 learning module aimed at improving States' understanding of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) and its effective implementation. We believe this module can be particularly helpful to the national points of contact. We encourage all Member States to use this and other training modules made available through the Office in your 1540 outreach activities.

As we noted last year, we urge our fellow Council members to adapt to evolving proliferation threats that fall within the remit of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#). In particular, we should be mindful of making all States aware of emerging technologies, such as unmanned aerial vehicles, which could be used as a means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction. Synthetic biology is another such technology that is already reconfiguring the approach life scientists take in their research. We see this most prominently even now in the effort to develop a vaccine for COVID-19.

The United States has asked the Office for Disarmament Affairs to work with civil society to develop a better understanding of how Governments engage with their relevant national stakeholders on these emerging technologies. We are hopeful that this process will foster a common understanding of best practices that can be reported to the Committee prior to the completion of the comprehensive review. Along these lines, the United States is especially grateful for the Chair's efforts to ensure the Committee's continued dedication to the Wiesbaden process and for his close collaboration with Germany in this regard. The Wiesbaden process undertakes the essential work of helping Governments identify and better understand and address 1540-related weapons of mass destruction vulnerabilities, particularly as they relate to dual-use technologies and materials, in relevant industrial and other non-governmental sectors. This is an important complementary effort in support of effective implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).

To ensure that these and other international activities continue to foster effective implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), the United States would encourage States to continue contributing to the trust fund for global and regional disarmament activities. The United States and our partners have asked the Office for Disarmament Affairs to further develop the network of regional coordinators for resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#). As we have seen in the examples of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States, these coordinators can play a vital role in raising awareness of the resolution among interested States, particularly in the sharing of lessons learned worldwide about available implementation-related assistance.

Finally, noting the Chair's reminder that "full and effective implementation [of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#)] is a long-term task", the United States urges the Security Council to ensure that the Committee has the mandate and the resources required to continue recruiting and retaining the most talented candidates to support its Group of Experts. The Committee's unique and sweeping mandate to address weapons of mass destruction proliferation risks means that the stakes are too high to do otherwise. The possibility of weapons of mass destruction being acquired and used by terrorists or other non-State actors remains one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) is one of the few established, authoritative international measures in place to address these threats. We have an obligation to ensure that the resolution and its implementation are as strong and effective as possible.