I am grateful for this opportunity provided by the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy to the Embassy of Italy to spend an evening on a subject which is being discussed in so many different fora, and yet remains one of the most - probably the most - daunting and frightening challenge of our time.

A special thanks to Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, Dean of the Fletcher School, and to Professor Deborah Nutter, the Associate Dean. I would like to welcome my longtime friend Ambassador Kurt Volker, and all of you here at Villa Firenze.

Let me mention a few of the reasons which explain my Country’s interest in moving towards a nuclear-weapons-free world; in fighting nuclear proliferation; and in securing an effective, binding and enforceable multilateral system.

I. History: during the two decades following the Second World War, Italy developed scientific and industrial capabilities fully suitable for sustaining civilian and military nuclear programs. The NPT was ratified only after an intense debate on whether to stay “non-nuclear”, and was subject to the provision that the legitimate nuclear powers which existed at the time continued to remain only five.

My country therefore perceived the multilateral system, since its very inception, as the fundamental framework for our national security and nuclear policies.
II. **Regional instability**, which could be dramatically increased by proliferation of nuclear weapons, in the complex environment surrounding my Country, from the Mediterranean Sea to the wider Middle East.

III. **Deeply shared values, with our NATO and EU partners**, which connect the security of our countries to a strong promotion of human rights and respect for human life. Because of the values we uphold, we abhor the very possibility of using Weapons of Mass Destruction.

IV. The need **to stop illicit nuclear trade**, in close cooperation with our partners.

Against this background, my government has been active in order to reinforce the NPT as a fundamental pillar of Italy’s foreign policy, and of the EU’s as a whole.

This Embassy promoted a discussion on this subject during the Italian Presidency of the G8 and again after the Nuclear Security Summit. Together with SAIS and the Landau Network, we held a Seminar on “Enhancing responsibilities from States towards the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty”. **Some of the suggestions made then are still relevant to this meeting.**

- **To increase transparency of all NPT States**, starting with Nuclear Weapons States, in order to abet the reduction of the perceived gap between Nuclear Weapon States and Non Nuclear Weapons States.
- To favor a multilateral posture for Negative Security Assurances, whereas now we just have some unilateral NSAs.

- To ensure generalized adoption of the IAEA Additional Protocol, giving more “teeth” to a tool which in the past has shown some limits, as it has not been able to denounce violators.

- To make sure that both Nuclear and Non Nuclear States seriously commit to nuclear disarmament and non proliferation.

- To give IAEA more authority to act against possible violators, without necessarily resorting to the UN Security Council.

- To engage the Non NPT States in “good faith”, to strengthen NPT provisions and to explore possible Regional Security Arrangements.

- To consider avenues for nuclear fuel cycle activities, with supplies backed by government assurances and by the institutions of Regional Fuel Banks.

The NPT Review Conference referred to some of these issues. Implementing them is, of course, another matter. This is particularly true now that we witness a nuclear civilian “Renaissance”, which we all support, also for environmental reasons (CO2 emissions limitations, Climate change etc.). The real challenge is to find a balance in combining nuclear civilian expansion with a proper management of non proliferation risks.
By their very nature, nonproliferation and disarmament are global problems and have to be tackled, first and foremost, through multilateral instruments. Since the 1960s, the international community has actively pursued a global approach to limit nuclear proliferation, and the Non Proliferation Treaty, with its three pillars, continues to be the cornerstone of international efforts.

The agenda set out by President Obama in his Prague speech generated a new, more conducive, environment (New START, UNSC Res. 1887, the Nuclear Posture Review, the Nuclear Security Summit, the successful NPT 2010 RevCon). This should encourage us to take further action, and concrete steps forward, in order to overcome existing problems.

If we want to exploit this momentum, we must use all the tools at our disposal, such as the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. Yet the Conference is stalled, unable to agree even on a Program of Work.

There are some ideas, both on substance and on procedural aspects. On the substance, two issues are crucial: the negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) and the so-called Negative Security Assurances (NSAs).
Restricting the potential targets through Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) and drying up the supply of the fissile material should significantly reduce the role of, and the incentive, to obtain nuclear weapons.

On procedure, there are a few small steps that could help the CD. The consensus principle should not be questioned; at the same time, it should not be invoked in procedural issues.

The negotiating framework within the CD could also be made more flexible, so as to overcome the obstacles of the plenary in the CD itself, where negotiations have stalled due to Pakistani opposition to FMCT. In other instances, IAEA efforts to improve monitoring activities have been weakened by the opposition of some members to the Additional Protocols. Finally, the CTBT must enter into force very urgently.

Smaller and informal groups could move the whole negotiation process forward. This is why Asia is so essential. North Korea, Iran, Syria, but also Burma, the Indian subcontinent, with the AQ Khan proliferation network, are all hot spots in this regard. Among the various groups which deal with – to a greater or lesser extent - specific issues, let me mention the Six-Party Talks on North Korea, the 5+1 on Iran, but also the Proliferation Security Initiative and, more recently, the Group of Ten, co-chaired by Japan and Australia.
How can we evaluate these efforts? Can we imagine that these groups can replace multilateral frameworks or just complement their role? Can we envisage a more efficient way to deal with these problems? Is the regional approach a valid alternative to the multilateral system or should they complement each other? Should we return to a pure multilateral system or are these groups valid alternatives? Should we change some of these limited formats in order to include other strategic partners?

So far, these efforts have yielded mixed results. Let us take a look at the two most compelling challenges facing us: North Korea and Iran, both in Asia. The Six-Party have now been blocked for 18 months.

Iran’s nuclear program has been under scrutiny for years, but the international community has not managed to stop it. Will stronger sanctions deter Teheran from its quest for nuclear weapons and prevent more dramatic developments?

Let me now give the floor to Ambassador Bosworth for his introductory remarks before the debate starts. Ambassador, thank you again for being here tonight.