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OPENING REMARKS: VERTIC-EWI MEETING ON THE CTBT

Andreas Persbo, Executive Director

East-West Institute, New York, 2 March 2012.

Thank you Jackie, and thank you *all* for coming to today's small meeting on the CTBT and its verification regime. It is good to see so many new faces. I'm very glad to see that so many of you remain supportive of this treaty and what it is trying to achieve.

Today marks the conclusion of a two-year project at VERTIC. When we started, President Obama had just promised to aggressively pursue the ratification of the treaty, so we proposed to produce a series of five pamphlets written by notable personalities on the regime. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs liked the idea, and so did the Ploughshares Fund. We're very grateful to both institutions for their financial support. We also proposed to hold a series of meetings, but as it became increasingly clear that ratification still is a long way off, we had to adjust the project somewhat. We had one meeting in Washington DC last year, and now this final one in New York.

The papers are available on our website. Ed Ifft, who is with us here today, wrote two. We also have had papers produced by Dr. John Walker of the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, and Minister Victor Slipchenko of the Russian Federation. I wanted both of them here today, but they could not make it. All of them were involved as nuclear weapon state negotiators, and all of them have expressed some valuable thoughts on paper. Dr. Jeffrey Lewis of the Centre for Non-proliferation Studies offered a non-governmental perspective. I would urge you to visit our site and have a read. They're designed to be short, and accessible.

If you want more of a challenge, you may also want to pick up a copy of this book: *Detect and Deter: Can Countries Verify the Nuclear Test Ban*. Jenifer Mackby, also here today, is a co-author of this work. I warn you, it may not be as accessible as our short papers, but it contains a lot of valuable information on the verification regime. If you are lazy, you can wait for my review of the book, which, if the editor allows it, will feature in the summer edition of the *Non-Proliferation Review*. And no, Jenifer, I won't tell you what I'm planning to write!

Finally, let me thank also Mr. David Cliff of my own Centre. He's with us here today, and I know he's been putting in many hours enabling this event: my thanks to you my friend. Thanks, of course, also Ardian and Euhwa here at East-West, who have been instrumental. I will now hand over to Jackie, who will be chairing today's session. Let me again convey my deep gratitude for all the work the Institute has done to make this event happen. You have been a fantastic partner throughout.

That's all I intend to say at the moment, Jackie, please take it away.

