

ISRAEL

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Check Against Delivery

Statement by
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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset let me congratulate you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support in the performance of your duties. We are confident that your leadership will steer our deliberations to a successful outcome.

Mr. Chairperson,

Among the issues on the agenda of the First Committee in recent years, there have been two resolutions regarding the Middle East. One resolution deals with the notion of establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in the region. This resolution has commanded consensus for almost thirty years and while we have certain reservations regarding its language, we attach importance to the annual endorsement of this idea, as part of the eventual establishment of the Middle East as a mutually verifiable zone free of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. In particular, we do so because the area of the Middle East clearly lacks any confidence building measures or dialogue on affairs relating to arms control and regional security.

The second resolution relates to the "Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East". This is a contentious text that seeks to focus on only one aspect of the regional security context, namely Israel. It also ignores the region's greatest proliferation dangers and its inherent instability. It also chooses to disregard the extreme hostility of certain countries in the region that continue to reject any form of peaceful reconciliation and coexistence with Israel. In many ways, the tabling of this resolution constitutes an annual declaration by its sponsors, that they prefer to continue to try and alienate Israel, rather than engage it and pursue ideas that might foster and encourage cooperative ventures for the good of regional stability. This distinguished committee would do well to foster and encourage initiatives of a conciliatory nature that aim at the reduction of regional tensions rather than their aggravation.

While the First Committee has always enjoyed its healthy share of cynicism, we cannot help but find it surprising that Egypt calls on Israel to join the NPT while it refrains from ratifying, inter alia, the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Palindaba Treaty) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The region of the Middle East has embodied and reflected many of the arms control and disarmament challenges faced by the international community. This stems from a myriad of reasons mainly connected to the type and character of some of the regimes of the region. This has also been the result of what one can only describe as a habitual indulgence of some Middle Eastern states in becoming party to international obligations that they do not intend to implement or even intend to blatantly breach. It is no coincidence that four out of the five gross violations of the NPT have occurred in the Middle East: Iraq under Saddam Hussein; Libya; Syria and Iran; whilst the fifth case, the DPRK, has been deeply involved in nuclear proliferation to the Middle East.

Iran's hostile policies and statements, its aggressive pursuit of missile technology and its active involvement in supporting and training terrorists in our region and beyond gravely exacerbates the situation and severely damages the possibilities for the peaceful resolution of disputes. Israel has consistently been the target of a vicious anti-Semitic campaign by the Iranian regime, notably statements made year after year by Iran's President calling for the destruction of Israel. The possibility that terrorists would enjoy an Iranian nuclear umbrella, or that they would actually receive such weapons from the Iranian regime, is startling and poses an imminent threat to regional as well as global peace and stability. We are convinced that without halting the Iranian nuclear program, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to promote an international or regional agenda aimed at strengthening the prevailing non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Middle East has been referred to in the interventions of several states during the course of the General Debate of the First Committee. Some of these references have been made in the context of the outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT. Israel would like to stipulate in the clearest terms that those who wish to impose on the region resolutions and initiatives from the outside — resolutions and initiatives that are not the result of careful, patient and comprehensive dialogue between all relevant regional states and that do not accurately and fully address the necessities emanating from the regional security situation — will not contribute to

resolving the problems of the Middle East. In fact, they might even prolong the problems further.

Arms control and other security issues must be realistically addressed while considering the regional context. The political reality in our region requires a practical, step-by-step approach. Comprehensive, durable and sustainable peace and stability in the Middle East is essential in this respect. The foundations for such a future must be based on historic reconciliation, mutual trust and respect, safe and recognized borders and good neighborliness. Effective arms control measures can only be achieved and sustained in a region in which war, armed conflict, terrorism, political hostility, incitement and calls for the annihilation of other states cease to be features of everyday life.

Mr. Chairperson,

Given the global realities, the renewal of interest in nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be accompanied by extensive efforts aimed at ensuring that such programs will not be misused for proliferation purposes, given that the characteristics of these technologies are inherently dual-use in their nature. Particular care should be taken in a volatile region like the Middle East.

Despite its inability to adequately address the particular challenges of the Middle East, Israel has always valued the non-proliferation regime and acknowledged its importance. Israel has consistently demonstrated a responsible policy in the nuclear domain and has joined, wherever possible, treaties and initiatives aimed at curbing and halting nuclear proliferation. As signatory to the CTBT, Israel is an active member of the CTBTO, maintains two monitoring stations and has contributed significantly to the build-up of its on-site inspection regime. Israel participated in April of this year in the Global Summit on Nuclear Security, which was convened at the initiative of President Barack Obama. Israel has also joined the Megaports Initiative led by the US Department of Energy, which works to prevent the possible illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials and to combat nuclear terrorism. In addition, and in conformity with its responsibilities as an active member state of GICNT, Israel hosted in June of this year an international workshop on "Nuclear Forensics and Legal Aspects of Combating Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism". With more than 100 participants from over 20 countries, the workshop produced a

clear report on how to develop this important field within the framework of the GICNT Initiative. Israel attaches great importance to the goals of GICNT and has participated in many of its activities. It would be encouraging to see our Arab neighbors adopt practical non-proliferation measures like Israel in the form of adherence to the MTCR, AG, NSG and Wassenaar arrangement. All of these regimes have been incorporated into Israeli laws and regulations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel has been stressing for several years that the prevention of transfers of arms to terrorists should be addressed by the international community as a matter of priority, and that a clear and comprehensive norm banning such transfers should be created alongside the demand for concrete steps to be taken. In our view, nothing can justify the practice of certain states to condemn terrorism and at the same time condone the transfer of arms to terrorist groups.

In this context, Israel is of the view that the ATT negotiations should serve as an appropriate and relevant forum to codify such a norm. Israel welcomes the process that has begun with this year's preparatory meetings. It is Israel's view that these negotiations could eventually lead to the creation of a good instrument provided that the following principles are accepted by all states negotiating:

- An ATT should opt for the high and robust standards on export control rather than settling for the lowest common denominator;
- The ATT should include concrete measures in order to combat arms transfers to terrorists;
- The decisions on arms export must remain under the full responsibility and sovereign considerations of states.

Mr. Chairperson,

Illicit trade and uncontrolled transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has severe destabilizing effects and humanitarian consequences and pose an acute threat to international peace and security. Israel welcomes the successful outcome of both meetings of the Biennial Meeting of States on SALW (BMS) held in 2008 and 2010 and is looking forward to the upcoming subsequent meeting of experts in 2011. Israel

is ready to play its part and engage constructively with other member states to contribute to the success of the next Review Conference in 2012. This success will be yet another step forward to prevent the transfer of arms to terrorists and reduce the human suffering caused by this phenomenon.

Mr. Chairperson,

The international arms control and disarmament community is facing a growing phenomena of independent initiatives that aim to circumvent the difficulties of multilateral negotiations by carrying out negotiations outside the scope of the UN or other relevant bodies, in smaller settings and amongst the like minded. In some cases, the most relevant actors are absent. While it is clearly the sovereign prerogative of states to carry out negotiations on issues of their choosing and even to become parties to such treaties, these initiatives cannot purport to create global normative standards. Nor are such discussions a substitute for painstaking negotiations that address security concerns in their fullest complexity through the involvement of the greater international community.

In this context, Israel supports the ongoing CCW negotiations on cluster munitions aimed at finding the appropriate balance between military and humanitarian concerns. We are of the view that these negotiations could have a real impact on the ground from a humanitarian point of view. It is our hope that states, which have been engaged in parallel tracks, would not hold out on the possibility of achieving substantive achievements in the CCW track.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel aspires to achieve peace and security for all the peoples of the Middle East. We hope that the day will come when a regional security framework encompassing all countries of the region will provide a cooperative multilateral response to all the security problems of the region.