

**Statement by
Amb. Ali A. Salehi, Islamic Republic of Iran**

**IAEA Board of Governors Meeting
Vienna, Austria, 8 September 2003**

Madam Chairperson,

The debate on this issue revealed two distinctly contrasting views. One attempts to circumvent the IAEA and issue an express ticket to the Security Council; and the other - the clearly prevailing view, though not necessarily dominating, seeks to sustain the process and allow the Agency to run its course and discharge its responsibilities withstanding political bullying. I believe the Director General summed up the debate in succinct and compelling terms. I may be paraphrasing, but the main points of that summary included, as I recall, that:

- The issue is important and needs to be cleared;
- The approach is technical and should remain technical;
- Expectation to resolve the matter soon is justified but the Agency should be allowed to exhaust its course;
- Failures do happen. But the important thing is to remedy them and ensure that all activities are under the safeguards;
- A negative conclusion on the ability of the Agency to verify the situation harms the safeguard;
- The reaction of the Board, in form and substance, should reflect the Collective view of the entire membership;
- And above all, there should not be any jumping to conclusions or jumping the gun.

The message is clear. The Agency is doing its job it can and if given enough chance it will arrive at conclusions... the process may have been slow but it is speeding up... there may be deficiencies and discrepancies but they can be remedied... and they should be allowed to be remedied... Process should be sustained... confidence enhanced... and results achieved... as otherwise all involved, including the Agency, would be at loss.

This Body engages, rarely and exceptionally, in political dialog. The debate here, alas, has rapidly evolved into one such exception. Despite my deep personal distaste for political talk, I find it now inevitable to address the misconceptions and convolutions that lie behind some hawkish perceptions.

It was stated here yesterday, by a few Governors, that time is up, that there should be a final ultimatum, a last resort, a last chance to wrap up, pack up and leave. A call that hinges again on propped up propositions of absolute urgency, entailing palpably, the now familiar and troubling presumption of "imminent and clear danger". As though the current scandal is not enough, Governments are being told

now in private that Iran will be a nuclear threat in six months and hence the rush to turn a safeguard issue into one of international security.

Fine! Every State can draw up and perceive threats, real or imaginary, **as they wish...** They may also build up hoopla around such perceptions and elevate them to the level of highest international priority, **as they can...** They can spin the facts, deceive and lie, **as they want...** They are even able to wield massive power to crush the conceived culprit, **as they do.** But what then?

There is no surprise, of course, to hear such roar from the United States. At present, nothing pervades their appetite for vengeance short of confrontation and war.

It is no secret that the current US Administration, or at least its influential circle, entertains the idea of invasion of yet another territory, as they aim to re-engineer and re-shape the entire Middle East region. This hard drive towards extremism of action from them, therefore, is but plainly expected. What surprises us, on the other hand, is to see some others, such as Canada, which is known for its principled stance on international issues, to stain its credibility.

I cannot but recall Canada's passionate urge to prompt NPT's indefinite extension. Canada went on record underscoring the balance of rights and responsibilities. Canada emphasized on the requirement to implement all undertakings, inclusive specifically of those related to peaceful use, as captured and approved already in contractual terms, by all States Parties. It is bewildering to witness now the stubborn silence on rights, on the one hand, and over-stretched stress on beefed-up responsibilities, on the other. Gone is the sense of balance that depicts logic and wisdom.

At this stage, it seems that it is best to extend the precept of transparency and put all the cards openly on the table.

A Draft Resolution has been tabled initially by three sponsors, followed by additional co-sponsors who routinely join the orchestration on the premise of their tradition and institutional commitment to maintaining unanimity. To express and establish a contrasting view, regardless of validity of its substance and merit, against this block is an awesome task ... nearly an impossible task. And the power of automatic majority has been exercised to the fullest for this decision. With minor, primarily cosmetic changes, the draft has now been re-introduced by Canada, Australia and Japan. The approach, structure, substance, language and venom have remained the same.

It has been argued that the draft resonates the Agency's account of the situation. Wrong. Dead wrong. The Agency begs for sustaining the process, for keeping the matter here in Vienna, for encouraging further cooperation, for ensuring compliance, for avoiding New York except if the whole structure crumbles, as fractures have their remedies here. The Draft, on the other hand, thrives for quick impasse, for fast pass to the Security Council, for breaking the process, for undoing cooperation, for fabricating a hasty ruling of non-compliance.

We have been told by some proponents of the move that they have bestowed the ultimate benevolence delaying the crunch for 45 days... some 360 working hours... to chew up every item on the flashy menu of to-do list. It is evident that even if everything on the list was edible, the whole lot could not be consumed and digested

by us and by the Agency in such a short time. This prescription is clearly designed for not being filled.

When presenting the list, which went way beyond obligations under the safeguards, and even beyond the Additional Protocol, the distinguished Governor of the United Kingdom was elegantly ardent to repeat after spelling out every single demand: “**BUT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH**”. I myself observed and absorbed at least five so catchy a phrase, and waited impatiently to hear, at the end of the ritual, at least a minimal indication of final satisfaction. Not meant to be... The long list appeared, in the end, to be open-ended. I indulge the Distinguished Governors of Canada, Australia and Japan, who now represent the list, to take the floor now, and tell us in clear terms, that even if the entire list was carried through and implemented in earnest...shall it suffice, at long last, to make Iran eligible to enjoy its inalienable right to peaceful nuclear activity without hindrance and impediment? Shall it?

The question is really not posed as polemic. It is a question that, if replied in clear terms, will serve as the key to unraveling this predicament, once and for all.

For the last twenty four years, Iran has been subject to the most severe series of sanctions and export restrictions on material and technology for peaceful nuclear technology. So our peaceful program had no choice but to become discreet. Our obligations had to be observed, while the slightest means to procure and produce our needs were chased rigorously and suppressed violently. No perceivable break was spared, no hole untapped, to ascertain full and complete deprivation of Iran from pursuing its peaceful program. The hunt goes on unabated today.

If cooperation has been slow, at times,... if there have been few incidence of discrepancies,... if there have been hesitations to adhere to the Protocol,...or to embrace confidence building initiatives, it is all out of one and only one concern. The U.S. intention behind this saga is nothing but to make this deprivation final and eternal.

Is any of the sponsors willing or prepared to offer the slightest assurance that the process has an end to it and that Iran will be freed from the shackles of unbridled restrictions. **If so, please come forward, offer this key and resolve this issue for good. Alas, there is none.**

We reject the ultimatum in this draft. The United States has remained adamant on sustaining the self proclaimed deadline despite appeals by a large number of Governors, including some of the co-sponsors, to drop it. This is music to the unilateralists' ears, but spells disaster for the Agency.

Among those who have pursued and produced nuclear weapons, outside The Five, Israel gets away with murder. It is pampered instead of being chastised...

Iran, in this midst, has stressed sternly and insistently that it has no intention whatsoever to pursue nuclear weapons, that it only yearns for peaceful capability, that it is ready and prepared to fulfill all its obligations under the Safeguards...and adopt additional obligations if it is protected against mal-intentions and abuse, that it will make every effort to take remedial measures wherever required, that it will remain transparent and maintain all its activities under the safeguards, that it intends to leave no stone unturned to further assure the Agency of its peaceful objectives, that it is a fervent subscriber to the NPT, a loyal Party to it and a staunch promoter of the Middle East as a nuclear weapon free zone.

This Draft targets the very core of our commitments and the current course of ever-accelerating cooperation. Its adoption, without the minor, but essential changes in the text, can kill an otherwise constructive process. We will have no choice but to have a deep review of our existing level and extent of engagement with the Agency vis-à-vis this resolution.

Madam Chairperson,

I request that my remarks be reflected in the records of the decision to be made on this draft resolution. My delegation wishes to have no part in this process or in this resolution. We reject, in the strongest terms, this resolution. I spare the Board of Governors, more than ten amendments which I could have otherwise put to the vote.

I wish to thank the Chairperson, the Troika and each and every member of NAM for the support they provided and amendments made to this draft resolution to move the process forward and to uphold the authority and integrity of the Agency. Unfortunately, the sponsors of the draft reacted in total disregard for principles of multilateralism and did not entertain our amendments. I reject both the process and this resolution and I leave this room in protest.