Check Against Delivery

Statement by
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EOV before the vote - "The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East"

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Mr. Chairperson,

Resolution L.2 entitled "The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East", which Israel will vote against, has been submitted once again by the Arab Group. This is a futile attempt to transport this distinguished body from the harsh and distressing everyday realities of the Middle East to an alternate universe where facts do not matter and narrow sighted, short term, political considerations prevail.

Let us delve for a moment into the imaginary reality created by the "Risk" resolution; By neglecting to address Syria as a continual proliferation threat in the region, the authors of this text would have us believe that Syria joined the CWC on its own volition with full intention of complying with its legal obligations. That is a proposition hard to credit in light of the Syrian regime systematic use of chemical weapons against its own population, its retention of residual chemical weapons capabilities, including R&D, and the gaps and inconsistencies in the Syrian regime’s multiple versions regarding the extent of its chemical weapons program. Are the authors of this resolution not disturbed by the attempts of terror organizations to emulate Syria's tactical use of chemicals as a means of warfare? If they are disturbed, they certainly give no such indication in the text.

Mr. Chairperson,

The "Risk" resolution similarly chooses to disregard Iran, who continues to be the biggest menace to peace and security in the Middle-East and beyond. Are the authors of this draft resolution of the opinion that all of Iran’s nefarious activities in the nuclear domain, as well as in the aspects of finance, training and support of terror organization are a thing of the past? Do they believe that those Middle Eastern countries, that are worried over Iran's subversive activities and hegemonic tendencies, will now be able to rest assured that these Iranian plans have been laid to rest? We sincerely doubt that these Middle Eastern states sleep more soundly now, even after the signing of the agreement with the P5.
While the authors of the "Risk" resolution may not accord importance to the fact that four regional countries, namely Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya violated their NPT obligations and promoted a clandestine military nuclear programs, we certainly believe that any draft resolution attempting to outline the real proliferation threats in the Middle East should be concerned by the fact that to some Middle Eastern countries compliance to international obligations is no more than a recommendation.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is also unfortunate that the draft resolutions' treatment of the Helsinki Conference is far removed from the efforts that have taken place in this regard. A genuine and fair attempt to portray the events that took place would not have neglected to refer to the five rounds of direct regional consultations that were conducted, between 2013-2014, between Israel and its neighbors, on the necessary elements to convene a conference on regional security and the Middle East free from wars, hostilities and WMD including delivery means. While these rounds of consultations, facilitated by Finnish Under Secretary Laajava, indicated that a conceptual gap remains between the regional parties, they were nevertheless an important start to a necessary dialogue. Israel, for its part, clearly indicated its willingness to proceed with these endeavors. It was unfortunate that the Arab Group preferred to express regret over the non-convening of the Helsinki Conference rather than invest the hard work and sustained efforts required to achieve consensus in these consultations and bring them to fruition.

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, the draft "Risk" resolution is detached from reality and from what the peoples of the Middle East have been experiencing; unrest and growing instability, unreleenting violence, large scale displacement of populations, territories ceded or abandoned to terrorists and a growing threat of proliferation of WMD. Roaming in the fantastic world created by the "Risk" resolution will not bring us any closer to achieving a Middle East free from wars, hostilities and WMD including delivery
means. Our feet must be firmly planted on the ground and rooted in realism in order to address the regions’ challenges in earnest.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel, has always maintained a policy of responsibility and restraint in the nuclear domain, and that of support of the goals of nuclear non-proliferation. We will continue to do so.

We reject this draft resolution in full and call upon members of this body to vote against it. Such a vote will send the required message to the Arab group that direct regional engagement, as well forthcoming attempts to build consensus on the broad range of security issues affecting the Middle East, is the only way to advance this important issue. Attempts to side-track, detour or shortcut by submitting one sided and biased resolutions in the multilateral sphere will not succeed. Quite the contrary.

Thank you.