Regional Issues

Chairman,

Regional proliferation issues received special treatment in the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by States Parties at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, as well as in the Final Document to the 2000 Review Conference. The former, of course, specifically addressed the existence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in the Middle East, and called for the remaining states of the region to accede to the NPT and to accept nuclear safeguards. The latter reaffirmed the aims of the 1995 resolution and characterized it as being on the basis on which the Treaty was extended without a vote in 1995. The 2000 Final Document also called on India and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty at non-nuclear-weapon States and to place all their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and on the DPRK to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. While the language of, and concerns addressed by, these two documents remain valid, both the geographic ambit and the nature of regional proliferation challenges confronting the NPT community have expanded in recent years.

Much has come to light since this body last convened. The confession by Dr. Khan, the founder of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons proliferation program, and subsequent revelations have laid bare a trafficking ring in nuclear weapons-related technologies of potentially global reach. Consistent with these disclosures, the February 24 report of the IAEA Director-General on Iran’s implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement noted that various aspects of Iran’s nuclear program had “common elements” with that of Libya and that its “technology is very similar and was largely obtained from the same foreign sources”. Other sources have also identified a direct connection between Dr. Khan and the DPRK’s nuclear activities. What is clear from all of this is that failures by regional powers to adhere to or comply with the NPT should not be seen through an exclusively regional security lens.

Canada continues to call on India, Israel and Pakistan to accede unconditionally to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. We recall that the Final Document to the 2000 Review Conference precludes the conferral of nuclear-weapon state status on India and Pakistan in particular. Canada continues to oppose any special status for India and Pakistan that would legitimize their possession of nuclear weapons, which remains a threat to international peace and security and constitutes a serious setback to nuclear disarmament. As initial steps, we urge India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to place all their respective fuel cycles under IAEA safeguards. We meanwhile urge both states, but especially Pakistan to reinforce and strengthen respective national export control programs as an impediment to
disarmament obligations are important steps reinforcing regional and international security. Libya’s renewed commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation should also be recognized as a reaffirmation of the NPT. In other words, the NPT works.

It has been over a year since the DPRK has permitted the IAEA to conduct any safeguards or other verification activities. Indeed, the DPRK was never in compliance with its safeguards obligations. The DPRK’s announced withdrawal from the NPT, the restarting of its previously frozen nuclear program and its bellicose rhetoric alluding to nuclear weapons ambitions, have further compounded this unacceptable behaviour and remains a profound challenge to the non-proliferation system, a setback to disarmament and a threat to regional and international peace and security. We urge the DPRK to rescind its announced withdrawal from the NPT, to accept safeguards on the full scope of its nuclear program and to conclude an Additional Protocol, to cooperate with the Agency in their implementation, and to completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle its nuclear weapons program. We welcome continuation of the Six Party talks and recognize the contribution of the People’s Republic of China for hosting these and for its positive lead in working towards an early and acceptable outcome to the ongoing crisis. We commend efforts taken by all parties and are further encouraged by their agreement to continue to work together to achieve a resolution of the crisis.

In no recitation of a “laundry list” of failures by regional powers to comply with or adhere to the NPT, should we lose sight of the global imperative that constitutes progress on nuclear disarmament. The 13 steps agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference remain our benchmarks for that progress. Canada again calls on the nuclear “haves”, the five nuclear-weapon States, to lead by example in this regard, building towards our shared goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.