



In the name of Allah the compassionate the merciful

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

PRESS RELEASE
No.

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
28, CHEMIN DU SAUVETZ-RODIER, 1209 GENEVA

Address by

*H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the
Islamic Republic of Iran*

*before
The Conference on Disarmament*

29 January 2004

Geneva

Please check against delivery



Madam President:

It is a pleasure for me to address this august body, the Conference on Disarmament. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the first Presidency of the 2004 session of the Conference. I am confident that with your experience, foresight and leadership, every effort will be made to steer the Conference on Disarmament back on track. You can rest assured of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in carrying out your arduous task.

Madam President:

Since the early nineties, three major developments have irrevocably changed our world. These developments were the demise of the bipolar system, the intensification of the globalizing process and the events of 9/11. More than a decade after the end of the Cold War we are still in the transitional period. During this period the international system has been more influenced by multilateralism than by the conventional rivalries and confrontations of the two superpowers. The concept of security threats has changed and the concerns of military and more specifically nuclear threats were superseded by the challenges of environmental issues, fatal diseases and the ever widening gap between the north and south.

This provided the United Nations system with the opportunity to fill the vacuum created by the termination of the superpower rivalries and to take steps in international norm building and addressing the many international concerns. The subsequent holding of numerous conferences and the codification of many international instruments is testament to this. The change in the nature of threat perceptions necessarily entailed a change in the manner of dealing with them and multilateral approaches were used to address the real security challenges.

The events of 9/11 created new challenges in the international environment. They gave way to further militarization of the international arena and fanned concerns over the very existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Today there is a genuine concern that the security priorities of states may change again and attention to military threats will gain the upper hand in security strategies. It should be noted that increased militarism does not necessarily translate into increased security. We should all be concerned about the destruction of our past achievements by the re-dominance of the military factor and the strengthening of unilateral approaches at the expense of multilateralism.

Militarization has a decisive role in the existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It threatens international peace and security. Today, the production and further development of WMDs together with the threat of their use, in parallel with the risk of non-state actors' access to them is ever more alarming.

We now face this fundamental question: At this critical juncture how should the Conference on Disarmament act for the most effective fulfilment of its duties?

Much has been said about the need for political will to reactivate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. It is however more important to comprehend the prerequisites of such a political will, among them understanding of our common responsibility and reviewing our past positions.

Due to its seven years of stagnation, the CD is now faced with a crisis. A critical situation can also be seen as an opportunity. The real task of every single member of the CD is to grasp it. Such a critical situation necessitates the introduction of new creative ideas. Now is the time to rethink our collective responsibility to enhance peace and security through the regulatory mechanisms of the CD and thus free the world from WMDs once and for all.

Ensuring that there are rules governing disarmament and arms control is a common responsibility and the aim is the creation of practical mechanisms to implement the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. The Conference, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, should play its role in effective implementation of the priorities set forth in SSOD I.

According to this common responsibility CD members should double their efforts to devise a comprehensive and balanced program of work. This should provide for the setting of norms and the drafting of international instruments, the need for which is ever increasing. Maintaining and strengthening international peace and security primarily depends on the efforts of each and every one of us to ensure a more secure world through the expansion of international rules and their implementation.

The CD's program of work should bridge the international community's dire need for peace and security with the realities of the world. Thus the five ambassadors' initiative, a valuable cross-regional venture, is considered as a remarkable step in the right direction that should be built upon.

Nuclear disarmament should necessarily be the focus of any attempt here. It is an embarrassment that nuclear weapons still exist in defiance to human civilization's quest. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is geared to eradicate nuclear weapons. We should all ask ourselves how far we have come for that purpose and how clear a picture we have of the future. In the interim the Non-Nuclear Weapon States do have a right to treaty bound negative security assurances. The thirteen steps, adopted by consensus at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, including the unequivocal undertaking by the Nuclear Weapon States, appear to have been put on ice. The current unilateral and bilateral reductions in nuclear arsenals -though welcome- are unverifiable, limited and devoid of effective international guarantees for irreversibility. These reductions, therefore, may not properly address the expectations of the international community.

We should not and cannot let the current standstill go on indefinitely. It is already too late. Time flies and the momentum to reflect and devise common responses to threats common to all, is being lost. The CD will die unless we act today. Let us all hope that

when things change, the time loss will be our only regret.

Madam President:

The requisite balance between rights and obligations is the basis of any sound legal instrument. This balance guarantees the longevity of the legal regime by providing incentives for membership and compliance. The provisions of the NPT on the right to nuclear technology as well as the imperative of cooperation and sharing of the technology among those who have accepted the obligations of non-proliferation have been considered essential, during Treaty negotiations, in order to establish and maintain the validity and viability of the NPT.

Iran, the last victim of weapons of mass destruction, has been a committed member of all major international instruments dealing with all classes of weapons of mass destruction. It is on this understanding that Iran has consistently been a fervent advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for decades and has actively and creatively contributed to international political and legal discourse in this area. It was Iran who initiated the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East and has vigorously pursued it together with others ever since. And it is on this same understanding that Iran, as a member of the NPT, maintains that it has an inalienable right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Iran is entitled to pursue its inalienable right and no justification is required to pursue a right.

However, the protracted pattern of failure to facilitate Iran's access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, coupled with an illegal active campaign to deprive Iran of its right, compelled Iran to protect its inalienable right and its vital national interests. Our experience proved that undue sanctions, restrictions, impediments and obstacles to deny the rights of NPT Member States run counter to the process of transparency and cooperation required under the non-proliferation regime. It is also wrong to consider them as effective tools to deprive Member States from exercising their rights. Had it not been for the severity of the impediments, Iran would have pursued all its entirely legal nuclear activities with fuller transparency and in collaboration with other fellow Members as it has always sought.

The fact that Iran has remained compliant and loyal to the NPT and the objectives of the safeguards, despite the unwarranted deprivation of its fundamental right, demonstrates the depth of its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. It is difficult to imagine that any other Member, facing similar restrictions, would have sustained unreserved commitment to the Treaty.

Iran's quest for nuclear technology and its peaceful application has never been unqualified. The need for confidence building, transparency and accountability has also been dear to us. We have recognized that more capability necessarily prompts more responsibility. It was why we reacted positively to the IAEA's requirements for full transparency and cooperation.

On 18 December 2003 the Islamic Republic of Iran signed the Additional Protocol, while continuing to fully cooperate with the Agency in accordance with its provisions in advance of its ratification. Iran also decided to voluntarily suspend all its uranium enrichment activities to allay expressed concerns regarding its nuclear objectives. A

robust verification mechanism is now in place to reassure the IAEA and the international community of the absolute peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear activities. My country will remain loyal and committed to its obligations and promises. We find no better framework than the NPT to protect our supreme interests in a secure environment while ensuring our sustainable development. We are keen to prove our determination and to examine the determination of others too.

Thank you Madam President.