

IAEA Special Board of Governors Meeting
February 4, 2006
Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the
Islamic Republic of Iran

U.S. Statement

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to join other colleagues in expressing condolences to the Egyptian delegation, and through them to the Egyptian people, for yesterday's tragedy on the Red Sea.

My government is pleased to have joined an overwhelming majority of Board members in signaling to Iran through adoption of this resolution the Board's firm determination that Iran must meet its nonproliferation obligations.

The Board's September 24, 2005 resolution found Iran in noncompliance with its safeguards obligations pursuant to Article XII.C.

That resolution also found that pursuant to Article III.B.4, Iran's nuclear program raises questions that fall within the competence of the UNSC.

At that time and again in November, we deferred reporting Iran to the Council to give Iran yet another opportunity to choose diplomacy over confrontation.

Unfortunately, Iran did not take that opportunity. As a result, the Board today carried forward the statutory process begun in September, by voting to report this Board's past findings and concerns regarding Iran's noncompliance.

I agree with the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt that today's report to the Security Council will not divest the IAEA of the challenge posed by Iran.

We continue to expect the Agency's investigation of Iran's nuclear program to proceed actively and urgently and we look forward to the Director General's implementation report in

March. We note that the DG's report will also be conveyed to the UNSC immediately after our next meeting.

By reporting Iran to the Security Council now, we seek to add the Council's weight to reinforce the Agency's role, reinforce its investigation, and add an imperative for Iran to choose a course of cooperation and negotiation over a course of confrontation.

The Agency has a specific mandate to deal with nuclear safeguards issues. This mandate is without prejudice to the rights and responsibilities of the Security Council to address matters that raise questions of international peace and security, as we have found is the case with Iran.

That is why the IAEA Statute expressly contemplates the Security Council's involvement in such instances of noncompliance. And that is why the Board made clear in September that such a report is mandatory.

In his recent State of the Union address, President Bush emphasized that, “the Iranian government is defying the world with its nuclear ambitions, and the nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons.”

We believe that this Board decision sends a strong and clear message to Iran’s leaders to abandon their pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability.

We continue to seek a diplomatic solution and we do not envision diplomacy ending as a result of this report.

Quite the contrary, we see this as part of a new phase of diplomacy, one aimed at strengthening the ongoing efforts of the Agency to investigate Iran’s deeply troubling nuclear activities, and underscoring the calls on Iran to resolve our concerns through peaceful diplomacy rather than threats and confrontation.

Through this path, and only through this path, can Iran persuasively demonstrate that it has now chosen to confine its nuclear program to exclusively peaceful purposes.

And through this path Iran can also start to restore its standing in the international community to the benefit of the Iranian people.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.