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[Extract]

Non-proliferation

Mr. Ambassador Alfredo Suescum

Alternate Representative of Panama to the United Nations

Mr. Suescum (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama regrets that we have had once again to face the decision to impose sanctions on Iran. As we stated during prior negotiations, we hold that the imposition of coercive measures reflects a failure of diplomacy on this issue. I stress that this is a failure by all parties, not only those of us seeking clarity about the nature of the Iranian nuclear programme with a view to making substantive progress towards the resolution of this disturbing situation.

Our decision to vote in favour of today's resolution was based on the following reasoning. Iran has been a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) since 1970, and as such it must adhere to restrictions on the production, development and proliferation of nuclear weapons. Panama recognizes that, under the NPT, Iran has the right to develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes and to carry out processes that are indispensable to that end, such as uranium enrichment.

But the exercise of that right involves equally important obligations, in particular open and transparent inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA) of activities and processes linked to the peaceful use of atomic energy. In that connection, it is timely to echo the words of the most recent report of the IAEA:

“With regard to its current programme, Iran needs to continue to build confidence about its scope and nature. Confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear programme requires that the Agency be able to provide assurances not only regarding declared nuclear material, but, equally importantly, regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran”.

The report goes on to say that “Although Iran has provided some additional detailed information about its current activities on an ad hoc basis, the Agency will not be in a position to make progress towards providing credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran before reaching some clarity about the nature of the alleged [green salt] studies, and without implementation of the Additional Protocol”.

In short, as the report notes, “the Agency is not yet in a position to determine the full nature of Iran’s nuclear programme”. Despite the noteworthy and commendable progress in the process, Panama believes that until we have comprehensive clarity about the present scope of its nuclear programme, Iran will not have fully met its obligations. In conclusion, the Security Council unanimously required Iran to suspend its activities related to uranium enrichment. The IAEA report acknowledges that, “Contrary to the decisions of the Security Council, Iran has not suspended its enrichment related activities”. The report goes on to enumerate the activities now being carried out by Iran in contravention of what has been stipulated.

Iran has not complied and continues to be in non-compliance with the mandate of the Security Council, thereby flouting the obligations that the Charter of the United Nations imposes on each and every Member State. It does not help Iran to say, as it did today, that it suspended the activities that it agreed to suspend. As stated in the report from which I have quoted today, Iran has not suspended the activities that it must suspend in fulfilment of its obligations under the Charter.

For the foregoing reasons, Panama decided to vote in favour of the draft resolution that was before us today. Nevertheless, we hope that this worrisome situation will be resolved soon. Nothing could make us happier than to avoid having Iran face the difficult consequences flowing from sanctions, thus sparing the rest of the world the unfortunate task of imposing new coercive measures.