

Statement
By
H.E. Ambassador Soltanieh
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to
the UN and other international organizations
In Vienna

To the First Session of
The Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference

On the Agenda of the Conference
1 May 2009, Vienna

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

1. At this very outset let me share my disappointment that the Conference at this time has not been able yet to commence substantive part of its discussions due to the differences over the agenda of the Conference. It is moreover distressing that delegations as well as the representatives of civil society have not been able to present their viewpoints with respect to the substantive aspects of the NPT.

It is quite understandable that although such points of view have certainly been reflected in the general statements of the distinguished representatives but their elaborations have been provided in separate statements to be made in the course of the cluster discussions. The statements which we are anxious to hear at this Meeting.

2. It seems however that some artificial distinction, between substantive and procedural aspects, is made in this Conference. My delegation is

therefore accused to wrangle about procedural issues at the expense of substance. I believe if such a distinction is not artificial, question would be raised as why some other delegations who see the agenda as just reflecting on some technical aspects of our business here, are so much adamant about just two words to be included in the agenda in reaffirming the necessity of Compliance with the all provisions of the Treaty. Let us therefore not to be shy to accept that agenda is part of substantive aspects of the NPT review process and in fact it lays out the framework of our substantive discussions within the process.

٣. It is claimed that Iran has suddenly opened the discussions on the formulation of the agenda which has been subject to months of negotiations with all interested States. Let me clearly put on the record that this formulation was never discussed prior to its formal distribution by the Chair to the States Parties to the NPT in New York on ٢٨ March ٢٠٠٧. I immediately reflected the concern of my Government regarding the necessity of non-discriminatory approach towards all obligations and provisions of the Treaty. In three more occasions during last month our representatives in New York and in Vienna, appealed the Chairman, to modify his draft of the provisional agenda, in order to remove substantive difficulties, prior the commencement of the meeting.

٤. Chairpersons in international negotiation possess a very prominent role in facilitating the proceedings of consultations and negotiations by participants. Chair is not among parties to a negotiation and need to create an environment for the parties to come across and reach to smooth decisions. Ambassador Amano as the Chairman of the session has made tremendous efforts to guide the discussion and we always appreciate his dedication for a successful outcome of the Conference. He however in several occasions tried to introduce, of course with good will, “his intention”, “his understanding”, “his vision”, “his ruling” and in fact “his position” in the negotiations. Unfortunately in some aspects of our work, the inflexibilities shown by the Chairman to easily reformulate and modify his initial suggestion as well as the un-transparent conduct of the

consultations, added to the already complex nature of our discussions and confusion of the parties concerned.

5. Much emphasis was made at this Conference on views of the majority versus minority. This categorization was sometimes used as a tool to put pressure against specific views and Parties. If this is an attempt to start the democratization of the international institutions particularly in disarmament area; I should publicly put on record that my delegation welcomes such an approach. It is evident that disarmament machinery has been made paralyzed in recent years by the broad application of the rule of consensus and accordingly the paralysis imposed on the Conference on Disarmament, UN Disarmament Commission, BWC negotiation as well as NPT process be it in PrepCom or the Review Conferences have been just candid examples of the victims of the rule of consensus. If this is the wish, my delegation in an attempt to break the deadlock is ready to start the voting procedure on this point of the Agenda and consider such possibility at other occasions when divergent views hinder the meeting of the NPT process to further proceed and reach a conclusion. However, fairly enough, if some belief that rule of consensus should be strongly observed in proceeding of the Conference, then we should also respect that application of the rule of consensus would not always correspond to specific positions. Furthermore if consensus is rule of the game, I hope you would agree with me that then it is inappropriate to try to single out my delegation three times in the formal Plenary, while well knowing before the meeting about our position.

6. Transparency in expression of positions is part of the international diplomacy which enables the delegations to fully understand each other and contribute to a successful give and take process. But in this Conference some delegations with strong views on the procedural as well as substantive aspects raised in this meeting, have opted to take a silent position and conceal themselves behind the sincere efforts of the Chairman and other delegations. Accordingly we have not received,

since start of this process, a clear answer as to who had the objection to the 2002 NPT formulation for the Agenda. There was not also a clear answer as to who had an opposition with respect to a minor modification in the existing formulation of the agenda to include compliance with all provisions of the Treaty. Although we were told that such an inclusion may not be agreed due to the overall agreement that the existing formation should not be opened for further discussion, but the conclusion is that the reason for this rejection was because the new inclusion of those two words were not agreeable to the some delegations. I think nobody is under illusion to believe that formulation on the agenda is sacred and untouchable. It is evident that formulation is just tools to enable us to convey the agreement of the Conference and always should provide sufficient flexibility to reach agreement. Formulations per se can not be closed for improvements. "Take it or leave it" is not also our rule of the game. My delegation is seriously concerned about the establishment of an unjustified precedence for the following Preparatory Committee Meetings and the Review Conferences.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates

4. My delegation entered into the Conference with determination to effectively, contribute to substantive discussions of the Conference. The parties to a treaty are considered to be members of club determined to closely collaborate with mutual respect for their common cause, encouraging others to join the club. Double standards, confrontation with and isolation of any State Party would put the said goal and the sprit of cooperation and the incentives of membership in jeopardy. In all frankness, my delegation did not expect such a stalemate in Conference, particularly over the reflection of a very important issue, with insertion of small phrase in the draft agenda of the Conference, mainly "the compliance with all provisions of the Treaty" which is proved to be the concern of all other delegations. We thus exerted all our endeavors here to carry the strong message that this Conference needs to convey in strong term in a most reasonable and effective manner. We are very

disappointed that some delegations have resorted to procedural tactics to prevent such insertion. Furthermore, an unfair propaganda has been started since the beginning of the Conference to politicize the position of my delegation through providing misinformation to the media. Had the Chair given a chance to the text of agenda of the 2002 Preparatory Committee, suggested by my delegation at the beginning of the meeting, the agreed language, already adopted by consensus, instead of insisting on his own proposal, we could have had considerable substantial discussion by now and the valuable time had not been wasted.

However, numerous delegations approached us and while admitting that the concern raised by my delegation is legitimate, appealed to our delegation to include such a concern in a manner that the existing formulation would not be modified.

^ During the pervious days my delegation has conveyed all sentiments of our colleagues and civil society to my capital, considering different options and formulations which could help the meeting to proceed further while the essence of our basic principle position which is a very important foundation of the Review of the NPT, being safeguarded and protected. As the last attempt, we concentrated on the initiative presented by the distinguished delegation of South Africa. Since Friday afternoon session, my delegation tried its best to explore all the possibilities and to find way to make this initiative plausible and agreeable.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

In conclusion, I have the honor to announce that in a display of good will and flexibility, **my Government can accept the proposal by South Africa; to include, the language as suggested, as a footnote to the bottom of the first page of the Agenda which refers back to an asterisk (*) which appears at the end of item 6 of the provisional Agenda** (let me read once more my instruction to prevent any confusion).

I stress that this would be the last possible flexibility that my delegation can make at this very critical juncture to advance this Conference.

I hope that the flexibility of my delegation will be reciprocated by other concerned delegations and therefore the Conference can adopt such an approach for approving the Agenda of the Conference, and start the substantial discussion immediately.

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