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Statement by Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Permanent Representative, on the adoption of Resolution 1803 regarding Iran and non-proliferation, in the Security Council, March 3, 2008

Thank you Mr. President.

Mr. President, the United States welcomes the adoption of resolution 1803. Iran's violations of Security Council resolutions not only continue, but are deepening. And instead of suspending its enrichment and reprocessing activities as required by the Council, Iran chose to expand dramatically its number of operating centrifuges and to develop a new generation of centrifuges, testing one of them with nuclear fuel. Iran continues to construct its heavy water research reactor at Arak, a potential source of weapons-useable plutonium. And still has not implemented the Additional Protocol. Once again, Iran has not made the choice the world had hoped for; once again, the Security Council has no choice but to act. At stake is the security of a vital region of the world and the credibility of the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency as they seek to hold Iran to its nuclear nonproliferation commitments.

Mr. President, the latest IAEA report states that Iran has not met its obligation to fully disclose its past nuclear weapons program. On the core issue of whether Iran's nuclear program is strictly peaceful, the report showed no serious progress. The IAEA presented Iran with documents assembled over a period of years from multiple nuclear states, from multiple member states and the Agency's own investigations. The documents detailed Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear warhead, including designs for a missile re-entry vehicle, and showed other possible undeclared activities with nuclear material. Iran dismissed these documents as "baseless and fabricated." But the IAEA does not share that conclusion.

Instead of slogans and obfuscations, the international community needs answers from Iran. For our part, I want to ask the Iranian authorities, "Why were you secretly working on designs for a nuclear warhead and its miniaturization to fit on a missile - all in violation of your NPT obligations? Why not tell the IAEA what happened and why?" On a matter of such global importance, the international community must be able to believe Iran's declarations that its nuclear program is for exclusively peaceful purposes. Iranian leaders must as a first step cease enrichment and reprocessing activities and make a full disclosure of all of its weapons-related work. We agree with the IAEA that until Iran declares all of its nuclear activities and ceases its weapons-related work, Iran's nuclear activities cannot be verified as peaceful.

Mr. President, Iran has still not fully implemented the Additional Protocol, which the IAEA requires to determine what other undeclared activities are taking place. I want to ask the Iranian leaders, "Why are you not fully implementing the additional safeguards? What are you hiding?" So long as the Iranian government continues to be secretive about its nuclear activities, refusing to implement the Additional Protocol, we must inevitably conclude that Iran is hiding weapons work and thereby preserving or establishing options for a nuclear weapons program. Iran wants us to believe that its nuclear program is peaceful, but it must be transparent with IAEA inspectors. It should implement the Additional Protocol as the Council and the IAEA have repeatedly called for.

Mr. President, the latest IAEA report states that Iran is not suspending its sensitive nuclear activities. For almost two years now, this Council has required Iran to suspend all of its enrichment-related, reprocessing, and heavy water-related activities. To increase Iran's incentives to cooperate with the Council we have imposed sanctions, to which the Council has added once again today. I want to ask the Iranian leaders, "If your goal is to generate nuclear power for peaceful purposes, why do you court increasing international isolation, economic pressure, and more for a purported goal more easily and inexpensively obtained with the diplomatic solution we and others offer?"

Mr. President, the Iranian Ambassador did not answer the questions I have raised. He devoted his remarks to distorting the official record of the IAEA. He stated explicitly that Iran will not comply with the Council's demand to suspend enrichment. Iran continues to make the wrong choice, to choose the path of defiance and to divert attention from its nuclear program by exploiting the plight of innocent Palestinians and bashing Israel.

I want the Iranian people—and others around the world—to know that the United States recognizes Iran's right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. They should know that the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany have offered to help Iran develop civil nuclear power, if it complies with the Security Council's demand—a very reasonable demand—to suspend enrichment. They should know that the P5+1 package of incentives includes active international support to build state-of-the-art light water power reactors and reliable access to nuclear fuel. The United States also supports Russia's supply of fuel for Iran's nuclear power plant in Bushehr. The delivery of this fuel exposes Iran's false claim that it needs to enrich uranium for civil nuclear power. A total of seventeen countries generating nuclear power today purchase their fuel on the international market rather than enrich uranium themselves. The Russian offer would provide fuel to Iran in a reliable way and would not contribute to proliferation.

Mr. President, Iran should do what other states have done to eliminate any doubts that their nuclear program is peaceful. Many states have made the decision to abandon programs to produce a nuclear weapon; two of them sit on the Security Council today as my colleagues: South Africa and Libya. Other countries that have stopped or stepped away from past nuclear weapon aspirations include Brazil, Argentina, Romania, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. These countries did not see their security diminished as a result of their decisions; indeed, one could easily say their security has been enhanced. Nor did they lose their right to develop nuclear energy. We urge Iran to take the same path these countries have chosen.

Mr. President, the international community has good reason to be concerned about Iran's activities to acquire a nuclear weapons capability. The present Iranian regime armed with nuclear weapons would pose a greater potential danger to the region and to the world. The Iranian government has been a destabilizing force in the broader Middle East and beyond. Contrary to its statements, Iran has been funding and supporting terrorists and militants for operations in Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Their assistance has killed countless innocent civilians. The President of Iran has made many reprehensible statements—embracing the objective of destroying a member state of the United Nations. Because of these factors, the international community cannot allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons. If Iran continues down its current path, it would likely fuel proliferation activities in the region, which, in turn, could cause the demise of the NPT regime itself.

Mr. President, the Ministerial Statement agreed to by the Permanent 5 and Germany shows that we remain committed to a diplomatic solution. If Iran shares this commitment, it will suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities and let diplomacy succeed. It gives us no pleasure, but regret, to have to pass another sanctions resolution. But our vote today demonstrates that the Council will act when countries violate their international obligations. We hope Iran will engage in constructive negotiations over the future of its nuclear program. Such negotiations, if successful, would have profound benefits for Iran and the Iranian people.

I want to close with a message to the people of Iran. America respects you and your great country. We want your country to be a full partner in the international community. And as President Bush has said, if Iran respects its international obligations, it will have no better partner than the United States of America. Thank you, Mr. President.

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