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Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East

Report by the Director General

Addendum

1. Paragraph 22 of the Report by the Director General to the Board of Governors and to the General Conference with regard to the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GOV/2003/54-GC(47)/12) refers to three responses received (from Jordan, Israel and Syria) to the Secretariat's proposal for an agenda for a forum on "Experience relevant to the creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East".
2. A further response has now been received from the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and is reproduced herewith.

Text of the Letter from the Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt addressed to the Office of External Relations and Policy Co-ordination of the International Atomic Energy Agency

[Received on 28 August 2003]

Vienna, 26 August 2003
199/IAEA/OAY

Sir,

Since 1991 the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency has adopted an annual resolution on the “Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East”. The adoption of this resolution by consensus reflects the international community’s ability, and that of the States of the Middle East, to achieve unanimity on an issue of fundamental importance to peace, security, and stability in the region.

Such unanimity clearly reflects the importance attributed by IAEA Member States to the universal application of IAEA safeguards, and in particular in regions of tension such as the Middle East.

It is worthwhile to note that since 1991 when the General Conference adopted the first of annual resolutions on the “Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East”, Egypt, as well as a number of other countries in the region, have responded positively.

Egypt has continued to undertake, within international and regional fora as well as within the framework of its bilateral relations with States, significant and well documented efforts aimed at establishing a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East. It has also continued to promote the initiative launched by President Hosni Mubarak in April of 1990 with the aim of ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, Egypt strongly supports and encourages all efforts leading to concrete progress towards a safe Middle East free from weapons of mass destruction.

Other Arab countries have also contributed significantly to the implementation of the resolution. Since 1991, six Arab States have adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, thereby achieving universal Arab adherence to the treaty. Also since 1991, six Arab States have signed safeguards agreements with the IAEA, of which four have already entered into force.

Israel thus remains the only State in the region not to have undertaken any steps towards implementing the resolution on the “Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East”. It remains outside the NPT, and continues to operate significant un-safeguarded nuclear facilities. Israel has resisted efforts to improve the text of the resolution and to update it. It has also not been forthcoming on the convening of an IAEA Forum on the “Experience Relevant to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free

Zone in the Middle East". Israel has done so in attempt to avoid addressing the issues at hand clearly and directly, favoring an academic exercise with little direct bearing on the Middle East.

Beyond the region of the Middle East, States have failed to act effectively to facilitate the implementation of the resolution on the "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East". Few, if any, concrete steps have been taken with the aim of realizing the objectives of the resolution.

With regard to the Forum on the "Experience Relevant to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East", Egypt has studied the reformulated draft of the proposal as annexed to your letter dated 6 June 2003. Egypt notes that its views, as contained in document GOV/2002/34 – GC(46)/9 of 8 August 2002, have been taken into consideration, and on this basis looks forward to the convening of the forum at the earliest possible date.

The international community has given much attention to recent cases of proliferation concern, sometimes seeking new approaches, and always devoting significant human and financial resources to the task. Yet, Israel escapes similar attention, and is subjected to little more than lukewarm verbal calls for adherence to the NPT and application of IAEA safeguards.

Egypt considers that it is important to draw the attention of the IAEA as well as its Member States to the fact that the item "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East" is in danger. Despite an invigorated commitment to the cause of non-proliferation in the world following the criminal and tragic events of September 11th, many States refrain from participating in the debate of this particular agenda item when it comes up for discussion at the General Conference. And while Egypt continues to table the annual resolution under this item, it cannot fail to note that its adoption by consensus is not complemented by an equally consensual commitment to its implementation.

In Egypt's view, multilateralism remains a necessary foundation for a safe and stable world. This view is reinforced by the fact that where multilateralism has failed, consequences have been grave. It is Egypt's sincere hope that where the "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East" is concerned, the IAEA and its Member States will undertake whatever efforts are required for multilateralism to succeed. Failure to do so will result in a known problem being left to fester, with unknown consequences.

Egypt therefore calls on all States concerned to undertake a re-evaluation of the nature of their commitment to the issue of the "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East". Such a collective endeavor can result in original proposals being made and new avenues identified for exploration. An appropriate mechanism, with the assistance of the IAEA, could be agreed upon within the framework of which all constructive and realistic proposals aimed at achieving concrete progress towards a nuclear weapon free Middle East could be explored.

[Ambassador]