
Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

17 April 2007
English
Original: Arabic

First session

Vienna, 30 April-11 May 2007

Working paper submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic on substantive questions to be considered at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

1. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the only way to achieve universalization of the Treaty and limit the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons is for all States to accede to it and implement article 3 thereof, which requires States parties to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with a view to creating a balance of rights and obligations among all States parties, both nuclear and non-nuclear, something that the Treaty has still been unable to achieve, even after more than 37 years in existence.
2. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that nuclear-weapon states have the greatest responsibility with respect to implementation of the NPT, which is the cornerstone for stemming the proliferation of nuclear armament and creating a world free of nuclear weapons. It believes that this can be achieved through serious and effective measures to implement the Treaty's objectives and not exploiting them by turning them into a discriminatory system that imposes restrictions on certain States to the advantage of others.
3. All the States of the Middle East have become Parties to the NPT with the exception of Israel, the only State in the region that possesses military nuclear capabilities outside any international control. Consequently, the international community is called upon to act in a serious way to apply pressure on Israel to accede to the NPT without conditions and without any further delay, and place all its nuclear facilities under supervision through a CSA with IAEA.
4. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the international community must recognize the concern on the part of the peoples of the region at the threat posed by Israeli military nuclear capabilities. These capabilities have been noted by many reports in the relevant international forums, as well as in United Nations resolutions of which the first was Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which explicitly



called upon Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency and after which IAEA scientific assistance to Israel was suspended. The most recent resolution was General Assembly resolution 61/103 of 3 January 2007, which reaffirmed the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty.

IAEA safeguards

5. The Syrian Arab Republic was among the first States to accede to the NPT, which it signed in 1968. This was in keeping with its conviction that the possession by any State in the Middle East of such destructive weapons, or their falling into the hands of some States and not others or of non-governmental or terrorist parties, would constitute a major source of anxiety and threat to the peoples of the region and the entire world.

6. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the NPT is one of the most important disarmament treaties concluded, and the basic international instrument designed to prevent not only horizontal but also vertical nuclear arms proliferation.

7. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that IAEA is the competent authority to follow up questions of verification and compliance through its Comprehensive Safeguards System, which is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. In that light, Syria complied with article 3 of the Treaty when it signed a CSA with IAEA in 1992, ratified by Act No. 5 of 2 April 1992, under which a national system for accounting for and monitoring nuclear materials was set up and the necessary groundwork and facilities established to ensure that IAEA inspectors can engage effectively in their duties under the agreement. The Syrian Arab Republic demands that IAEA work to apply that regime to all States without exception or discrimination.

National legislations to prevent illegal trafficking in radioactive and nuclear materials

8. The competent authorities in the Syrian Arab Republic maintain strict border control of land, sea and air entry points in accordance with national legislation and regulations in force, with the goal of combating illegal trafficking in radioactive and nuclear materials.

9. The Syrian Arab Republic implements reporting, registration, licensing and monitoring mechanisms for imported or exported nuclear and radiological materials and equipment designed for peaceful uses of nuclear energy in accordance with international norms.

10. In implementation of Legislative Decree No. 64 of 2005, the Syrian Arab Republic has issued regulatory guidelines for radiological protection and the security and safety of radiation sources. These guidelines give the competent national agencies in Syria wide authority for national oversight of any transactions involving radioactive or nuclear materials, including, inter alia, the design, manufacture, import and export of radiation sources. The Decree also lays out specific procedures for submitting all such activities to an obligatory licensing system with penalties for violators of its provisions or those of other national

legislation. The provisions of this Decree are consistent with international requirements in this regard.

A nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East

11. The Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the signature in September 2006 of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia as an effective step in promoting peace and security in the region and the world.

12. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, and Pelindaba, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, as positive steps and important measures towards global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

13. The Syrian Arab Republic has worked since 1987 to make the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, above all, nuclear weapons. In April 2003, on behalf of the Arab Group, Syria proposed an initiative to the Security Council in New York to rid the Middle East region of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons. At the time, Syria declared to the international community that, along with its Arab brothers and the peace-loving States of the world, it would contribute actively to transforming the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. However, international conditions at the time and the positions of certain influential States in the Security Council did not favour the success of that initiative. In December 2003, the Syrian Arab Republic resubmitted the same initiative to the Security Council. It is still in blue before the Council, awaiting more favourable international conditions for its resubmission and adoption.

14. The Syrian Arab Republic expresses its concern over international indifference when it comes to putting pressure on Israel to implement international resolutions, and calls for an end to the application of a double standard that sheds doubt as to the credibility and universality of the Treaty.

15. It also expresses again its grave concern over Israel's manifest indifference and intransigence and its refusal to accede, or even to express its intention to accede, to the NPT and submit all its nuclear installations to international inspection. Syria stresses the importance of ridding the region of all weapons of mass destruction, and warns against the outbreak of a dangerous and destructive nuclear arms race in the region.

The resolution on the Middle East issued by the 1995 NPT Review Conference

16. The Syrian Arab Republic recalls that the resolution on the Middle East was part of an agreed-upon comprehensive package designed to gain the approval of a majority of the non-nuclear States parties for an indefinite extension of the Treaty with the proviso that the problems and concerns of those States should be examined subsequently. The 1995 Conference undertook to work for the strengthening of the Treaty, universal accession to it, the adoption of principles and objectives dealing with the issue of its implementation, and the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

17. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses the need for full compliance by all States parties, and in particular the States that adopted the 1995 resolution on the Middle East as an integral part of a comprehensive package, with the set of decisions issued

by the 1995 Review Conference entitled “Strengthening the review process of the Treaty”, “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament”, “Extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, and “Resolution on the Middle East”, the last of which has played such a positive role in inducing all the Arab States to become Parties to the NPT.

18. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that, in addition to the foregoing, all States parties must comply with implementation of the 13 practical steps contained in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. That Conference declared that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East remains valid until the goals and objectives are achieved and is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995.

19. The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the international community, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to shoulder their responsibilities and make the utmost efforts to identify practical steps to ensure full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East and achieve its objectives. Twelve years have gone by since the adoption of that resolution without a single practical step towards implementing it.

Nuclear terrorism

20. The Syrian Arab Republic was, in 1985, among the first States to call for an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to address the subject of terrorism and define what is meant by that term. The Syrian Arab Republic proposed the conference for a second time in 1991, stressing the importance of holding such a conference, and other States have done the same in 1999 and 2001. However, all such calls have met with failure due to political reasons having to do with the selectivity and double standards applied by some to the issues of terrorism and the right of peoples to struggle against foreign occupation.

21. The Syrian Arab Republic acceded to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in New York in April 2005, and the accession was ratified by Act No. 5 of 2005. The Syrian Arab Republic also signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in September 2005, and is in the process of acceding to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic has committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and was one of the first States to submit the national reports requested under that resolution.

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy

22. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that implementation of the NPT by nuclear-weapon States must not have a negative impact on peaceful uses of nuclear energy by other States parties to the Treaty.

23. The facilitation of the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge, equipment, materials and services for peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a right of the States parties to the Treaty, and contributes to progress in general and to

bridging technological and economic gaps between the developed and developing countries in particular.

24. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses the right of all States to acquire nuclear energy for various peaceful uses. It is incumbent upon all States to affirm their commitment to implementing article 4 of the Treaty, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, and such implementation should be done in a balanced way without discrimination. It is unacceptable for one Party to be in an exceptional situation at the expense of another Party when it comes to sensitive and momentous issues involving either technological development or regional security.

25. The Syrian Arab Republic places great importance on the need to deepen the essential role played by IAEA in promoting and facilitating the transfer of nuclear science and technology to member States in accordance with its basic Statute and in a way that strikes a balance between the Agency's monitoring activities and its activities related to the dissemination of nuclear technology and applications.

Security guarantees

26. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It stresses that unilateral or bilateral security guarantees given by nuclear States to non-nuclear States parties to the NPT do not respond to all the needs, concerns and requirements of non-nuclear States, because they are conditional and non-binding, and have not been negotiated in an international forum. Therefore, Syria stresses the importance of implementing the decision on principles and objectives adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, in order to give priority to initiating serious negotiations to conclude an unconditional, non-discriminatory, legally binding international instrument that addresses security guarantee issues.

27. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that there is a need for the nuclear-weapon States to show a clear political will regarding the identification of practical steps to give up all their nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices under strict international control in order to realize and strengthen international peace and security.

28. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that there is a need for nuclear-weapon States to provide comprehensive negotiated security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT on terms to be defined by a future international instrument, and to pledge to refrain, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, from the threat or use of force against non-nuclear States, and to commit to implementing the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions. It also believes there is a need to continue promoting cooperation between States and international organizations to prohibit, combat and eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations wherever and by whomsoever it is committed.

29. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that, in the absence of such an international instrument concerning the provision of security guarantees, there is a need for all nuclear-weapon States parties and non-nuclear-weapon States parties to remain bound by Security Council resolution 984 (1995), adopted unanimously on 11 April 1995, by which the Security Council took note, for the first time, of security assurances made by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States and clarified the measures to be taken to provide assistance to non-nuclear weapon

States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the event that such States are the victim of an act of, or object of a threat of, aggression in which nuclear weapons are used.

Proposed practical steps towards non-proliferation

30. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the NPT and the goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons, the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should recommend the following:

(a) Nuclear-weapon States should be obligated under the NPT to show a genuine political will to lay out practical steps to give up all their nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices and dispose of them under strict international control.

(b) Priority should be placed on nuclear disarmament in regions of tension and conflict. In this regard, fostering the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is of prime importance as a step along the road to eliminating nuclear weapons completely, preventing their proliferation, and reducing the danger of arms races in conflict regions.

(c) It is imperative for nuclear-weapon States to stop placing technical and commercial restrictions and obstacles in the way of non-nuclear-weapon States and allow them the opportunity to benefit from the various peaceful uses of nuclear energy in implementation of article 4 of the Treaty.

(d) The authority and role of IAEA in addressing nuclear proliferation issues should be supported. The principle of transparency in the activities of States and cooperation between States should be firmly established so that the Agency can carry out its obligations and implement the tasks assigned to it with respect to non-proliferation issues and progress towards establishing an effective nuclear disarmament programme.

(e) It is imperative for nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their responsibilities, which would contribute to universalization of the NPT.

(f) It is imperative to implement the resolution on the Middle East first adopted by the 1995 NPT Review Conference and reaffirmed at the 2000 Review Conference.

(g) The Conference on Disarmament should be allowed to agree on an agenda that places nuclear disarmament at the top of its concerns.

(h) Adequate impetus should be given to implementing nuclear disarmament resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to activating United Nations disarmament mechanisms, including the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission.

(i) It is important that the international community recognize the grave concern on the part of the States of the Middle East over Israeli nuclear capabilities, which are developing and increasing in the absence of any international control whatsoever.

(j) It is imperative that the international community recognize the importance of article 3 of the Treaty and its relevance to issues involving the security and safety of nuclear programmes and verification of their peaceful nature. There must be a call by the international community to all States parties, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to refrain from exploiting these issues to impose limitations or restrictions on nuclear technology transfer to other States parties, especially those that have submitted to the IAEA Safeguards System, on the pretext of applying them for sake of the security and safety of a nuclear programme.
