First Committee
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by
Ms. Tamar Rahamimoff-Honig
Director, Arms Control Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Explanation of vote before the vote

L.2/Rev.1 – The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

United Nations, New York
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Mr. Chairperson,

Resolution L.2 Rev.1 entitled "The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East", which Israel will vote against, has been submitted once again by the Arab Group. This is an unfortunate attempt to divert the First Committee's attention away from the real proliferation challenges facing the Middle East. This approach serves neither the interests of regional states nor those of the international community.

Although the text of this resolution has been altered from previous years' language, the change introduced by its authors, was by no means an attempt to reconcile differences pertaining to it. Quite the contrary.

Not only does this resolution distort the truth, it also fails to genuinely address the real WMD risks in the region. This should worry all of us, as this resolution undermines any attempt to address regional threats effectively, as well as curtails chances for a real and constructive dialogue between regional states.

Mr. Chairperson,

The authors of this resolution neglect to mention that four regional countries, namely Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya- some of which are sponsors of this draft resolution- violated their NPT obligations and promoted a clandestine military nuclear program in contravention of their international obligations.

They also overlooked Iran's continued aspirations for nuclear weapons and its continuous development of ballistic missiles. In this vein it is important to recall that since January of this year, Iran tested 10 ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. These were of various ranges, including a missile with a range of 2,500 km- well beyond the Middle East. During the month of March, Iran tested a missile inscribed with a direct threat to annihilate the State of Israel. The Secretary General of the United Nations, called upon Iran in his July report under UNSCR 2231, to refrain from conducting these missile tests, warning that they have the potential to increase tensions in the region. He also clearly stipulated that Iran's missile tests are not consistent with the spirit of the JCPOA.

Taken together with Iran's subversive activity in the region, as well as its support, in training, weapons and financial means, of terrorist organizations in the region, it is clear that the drafters of this resolution have misdirected their efforts.

Mr. Chairperson,

The drafters of this resolution would have our attention turned away also from the continuous use by the Syrian regime of chemical weapons, as was clearly reported by the JIM in its August 24th and October 28th reports. The findings of the JIM indicate a persistent and worrying pattern of use of chemical weapons against the Syrian population, even after Syria's accession to the CWC and its obligation to forgo such capabilities and use of chemical weapons. This is especially significant in light of remaining discrepancies, inconsistencies and gaps in the Syrian declarations to the OPCW and the growing concerns about residual chemical weapons' capabilities,
including R&D, which would allow Syria to rehabilitate its chemical weapons' program. This resolution would have us also forget about proliferation of chemical weapons to terrorist organizations and the cases of use of such weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is also unfortunate that the drafters of this resolution have not deemed to mention the five rounds of direct regional consultations with the facilitation of former Finnish Under-Secretary of State, Jaako Laajava, between 2013-2014. During these consultations, Israel and its neighbors engaged on the necessary elements to convene a conference on regional security and a Middle East that would be free from wars, hostilities and WMD including delivery means. While these rounds of consultations indicated that a conceptual gap remains between the regional parties, they were nevertheless an important start to a necessary dialogue. Israel, for its part, clearly indicated its willingness to proceed with these endeavors. It was unfortunate that the Arab Group preferred to express regret and concern over the non-convening of the 2012 Helsinki Conference in this and other resolutions rather than engage in the sustained efforts required to achieve consensus in these consultations and bring them to fruition.

Mr. Chairperson,

The draft "Risk" resolution is detached from reality and from what the peoples of the Middle East have been experiencing; unrest and growing instability, unrelenting violence, large scale displacement of populations and territories ceded or abandoned to terrorists. The threat of proliferation of WMD cannot be ignored or misrepresented as the text of this resolution purports to do.

Mr. Chairperson,

We reject this draft resolution in its entirety and call upon members of this body to vote against it. Such a vote will send an essential message to its authors that direct regional engagement, as well as forthcoming attempts to build consensus on the broad range of security issues affecting the Middle East, is the only way to advance this important issue. Attempts to side-track, detour or shortcut by submitting one-sided and biased resolutions in the multilateral sphere will not succeed. If regional states wish to truly address the real risks and challenges in the region, they need to start by adopting a mature and forthcoming approach which promotes direct dialogue, the building of confidence and trust.