

South Africa seeks to change UNSC draft resolution on Iran

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South Africa proposed on Monday amendments to a draft resolution agreed by six major nations last week to impose sanctions on Iran over its controversial nuclear enrichment activities.

The text of the amendments prepared by South Africa, a copy of which was obtained by Xinhua, called for a “90-day” timeout on sanctions against Iran.

“Sanctions should never be adopted in haste when other tracks for the peaceful resolution of a situation should be addressed,” it said.

“The 90-day period of grace provided to Iran would allow for a de-escalation of tensions and create an opportunity for Iran and the other parties involved to resume negotiations towards a long-term peaceful solution,” the document said.

“This short period would be sufficient to make progress with political negotiations but would be insignificant in terms of the further advancement of Iran’s enrichment program,” it said.

“The resolution should focus only on Iran’s nuclear program,” said the document, proposing changes including the removal of the embargo on Iranian arms export and some parts of the asset-freeze and travel restrictions list targeting Iranian banks and Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps.

South African Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, the council’s president for March, told reporters that his country advocates the peaceful use of nuclear technology but opposes proliferation.

“We are looking to see that it addresses issues of proliferation and addresses the issues of negotiations,” Kumalo said. “At the same time we want the role of the IAEA protected.”

He also said the six countries, the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany, will brief the other nine members of the council on matters related to the draft resolution in an informal meeting on Tuesday.

But he emphasized that formal consultations on the draft resolution will only be held on Wednesday.

On Thursday, the six countries reached agreement on the draft resolution imposing tougher sanctions against Tehran over its unyielding nuclear ambitions.

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