



Security Council

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Letter dated 13 September 2021 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you with regard to the letter dated 25 August 2021 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2021/753](#)).

It is extremely ironic that the United States – which, by its unlawful withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is in material breach of such a cardinal principle of international law as *pacta sunt servanda*, and which, by its subsequent policies and practices including the application of its inhumane unilateral sanctions against Iran, is arrogantly in violation of America’s explicit legal obligations under Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) – is now brazenly accusing Iran of defying paragraph 3 of annex B to that resolution for the launching of space launch vehicles, while there is no reference in that resolution or its annexes to space launch vehicles. Additionally, contrary to the claims made in that communication, the space launch vehicles do not incorporate technologies identical to “ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”. Accordingly, the space launch vehicles are not even covered by that resolution.

Yet, to establish a possible link between paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the launches by Iran of certain space launch vehicles, in order to make an arbitrary interpretation thereof and, consequently, to draw an arbitrary conclusion with regard to the implementation of that paragraph and the resolution itself, the United States has attempted to invoke the criteria enshrined in the Missile Technology Control Regime, while there is no implicit or explicit reference in that paragraph either to the Missile Technology Control Regime itself or to its definitions and, thus, any reference to it is unprofessional, deceptive and totally misleading.

Iran categorically rejects any attempt to reinterpret that paragraph, including through the definition used by the Missile Technology Control Regime, which is an exclusive and closed export control club serving the commercial and security interests of its very limited members. While the criteria enshrined in the Missile Technology Control Regime are not legally binding, even for its 35 members, any attempt to portray them as the universally agreed definition is definitively wrong.

Despite this fact, according to the Missile Technology Control Regime, there is even a clear difference between “ballistic missile systems” and “space launch vehicles”. The technical characteristics and operational requirements of space launch vehicles clearly make them distinct from ballistic missile systems. It is also an acknowledged fact that space launch vehicles are designed to place satellites into



orbit, not deliver warheads. Like other space launch vehicles, Iran's space launch vehicles are also designed and developed exclusively for placing satellites into orbit.

It is also worth recalling that when, on numerous occasions, the launches by Iran of ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles have been discussed during Security Council consultations in the past several years, "no consensus was reached among Council members as to whether these Iranian launches were covered by resolution 2231 (2015)" (S/2016/589, S/2016/649, S/2017/515, S/2017/537, S/2017/1030, S/2017/1058, S/2019/492, S/2019/934 and S/2020/531).

It should also be stressed that the addition of the phrase "designed to be" to the phrase "capable of delivering nuclear weapons", used in the already terminated Security Council resolution 1929 (2010), was a deliberate modification following lengthy negotiations in order to exclude Iran's defensive missile programme that is "designed" to be exclusively capable of delivering conventional warheads. It is extremely disappointing that this negotiating history and the *raison d'être* of the inclusion of that phrase have deliberately been disregarded by the author of the above-mentioned letter, as if such a completely substantive qualifier does not exist in paragraph 3 at all.

The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects the unfounded allegations by the United States and strongly condemns its desperate attempts to misinterpret paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), and stresses once again that its missile and space programmes, including the launches of ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles, fall outside the purview or competence of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and its annexes.

At the same time, the international community must be extremely vigilant regarding the politically motivated approach by the United States and certain other industrialized countries, which, under such absurd pretexts as proliferation concerns, attempt to demonize benign technologies, such as space technology, that are critical for the socioeconomic development of all nations, particularly developing countries. This trend seriously runs the risk of endangering the exercise of the inherent right of States to free access to all areas of space and celestial bodies, their freedom in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes as well as their free access to outer space through space science, technologies and their applications without discrimination of any kind.

The use of space launch vehicles by Iran is merely part of scientific and technological activity related to the use of space technology in such areas as disaster management, environmental monitoring and natural resource management, communication, human health, food security and sustainable agriculture. The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to continue to exercise this inherent right for its socioeconomic interests, which is absolutely consistent with international law.

The United States has also attempted to induce that, according to resolution 2231 (2015), the supply, sale, or transfer to Iran of "ballistic missile-related" items, materials, equipment, goods and technology is prohibited. Taking into account that the related "prohibitive" language of the already terminated Security Council resolution 1929 (2010) has changed to "permissive" language in resolution 2231 (2015), it is quite obvious that the supply, sale or transfer of such items and technologies to Iran is absolutely permitted. The United States, in another case of violation of resolution 2231 (2015), has rendered the case-by-case authorization mechanism elaborated in paragraphs 4 and 5 of annex B to that resolution inoperable, including by a law passed on 2 August 2017 (S/2017/739). Recalling that there were proposals by the Council members with regard to the operationalization of the authorization mechanism, the Security Council and the Secretary-General are urged

to consider concrete guarantees to ensure the effective and functional implementation of the “case-by-case” authorization mechanism.

Furthermore, the United States has brazenly stated that Iran’s defensive missile programme would undermine the “fundamental credibility of the Council’s decisions”. What, in fact, has eroded the credibility of the Council and undermined the authority and standing of its decisions are the policies and practices of the United States itself, a living example of which is its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in flagrant contravention of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and in material breach of its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. With such a dark record, the United States cannot represent itself as having true concern about the credibility of the Council’s decisions, while it has always considered this important organ as a mere tool in its foreign policy toolbox.

Moreover, in its letter, the United States, in yet another provocative statement, has also desperately attempted to portray Iran’s defensive ballistic missile programme as a factor for the so-called “regional tension”, posing a threat to international peace and security. In fact, the main source of regional insecurity and instability for more than seven decades has been and continues to be the irresponsible and expansionist policies as well as the unlawful and criminal practices of the Israeli regime, which enjoys unreserved support from the United States. Additionally, what indeed poses a real and serious threat to regional and international peace and security are the highly sophisticated conventional weapons of the Israeli regime, most of which have been supplied by the United States, as well as its weapons of mass destruction, particularly its nuclear weapons.

If peace and stability in the Middle East matter to the United States, nothing is indeed more essential and urgent than compelling the Israeli regime to renounce its nuclear weapons, which are the main threat to peace and security in the region; to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and all other international legally binding instruments banning weapons of mass destruction; to stop its warmongering and expansionist policies; to put an end to violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the regional countries; and, above all, to end the occupation of territories of States of the region.

Moreover, the significantly large presence of United States military forces in the Middle East as well as the massive export of sophisticated weapons to certain regional countries, thus turning the region into a tinderbox, proves that it has no genuine concern about peace and security in this volatile region.

Therefore, the United States must stop such hypocritical statements and refrain from making unfounded accusations against other States as no amount of smear campaigning, deception, disinformation and accusations can cover up the brutalities and criminal acts of the Israeli regime or deflect attention from the destabilizing, divisive and disruptive policies and unlawful practices of the United States in such a volatile region as the Middle East.

Instead of such unprofessional, provocative and irresponsible conduct, including making baseless allegations against Iran with respect to the implementation of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), the United States must comply, unconditionally, fully and genuinely, with all its respective legal obligations under that resolution, particularly its annex A.

Since Iran’s activities related to space launch vehicles and ballistic missiles fall outside the purview or competence of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and its annexes, and given the mandate set forth in the note by the President of the Security Council on Security Council tasks under resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) ([S/2016/44](#)), the Secretary-General is therefore expected to seriously respect his mandate and avoid reporting on

such irrelevant activities in his next reports on the implementation of that resolution. Instead, based on the foregoing terms of references, the Secretary-General is kindly requested to report on the violation of that resolution by the United States.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Majid **Takht Ravanchi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
