



Security Council

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Letter dated 20 September 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to my letter of 20 August, I have the honour to reiterate our position on the claims of the United States side on allegedly triggering the “snapback” mechanism in line with paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#).

We continue to proceed from the obvious – that such claims are illegitimate, since the United States deliberately and officially withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018 and made no secret of this withdrawal and consequently persistently violated Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, thus forfeiting any right to make use of the instruments provided for by Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), including those in paragraph 11.

This approach is widely shared by the majority of the Council members, which explicitly expressed it both orally at the Security Council meeting on 25 August and in their written communication to the President of the Council. The United States remains the only Member State to claim the opposite.

On 25 August the President of the Council clearly stated the following: “There are questions posed to me. On the Russian Federation’s question as well as others, having consulted with members and received letters from many member countries, it is clear to me that there is one member which has a particular position on the issue, while there are significant numbers of members who have contesting views. In my view, there is no consensus in the Council. Thus the President is not in the position to take further action.”

This conclusion, as well as corresponding opinions of the majority of Council members, is reflected in the letter of the President dated 27 August, issued as document [S/2020/837](#).

Therefore, we continue to proceed from the understanding that the “snapback” mechanism has not been triggered and all the Security Council resolutions listed in paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) continue to be terminated, which effectively means that no United Nations sanctions against Iran have been restored and any claim or action to the contrary will be unilateral and illegitimate.

Our position on the matter is further elaborated in the official statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation dated 20 September (see annex).

I would be grateful for the circulation of the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia



Annex to the letter dated 20 September 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation

Moscow, 20 September 2020

The United States of America is continuing to mislead the international community by speculating about the completion of some procedures in the Security Council to bring back into force its sanctions resolutions on Iran, which were suspended in 2015 following the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Needless to say, the United States knows full well that these statements are untrue. For this reason, the United States has threatened, as is its habit, to impose sanctions and other penalties against all who dare disagree. This seems to be the only tool left in the American foreign policy toolbox.

In actual fact, the Security Council has not taken any steps to reinstate the sanctions previously in effect against Iran. Washington's actions are nothing more than political theatre aimed at putting the Security Council at the service of its maximum pressure campaign against Iran and turning this authoritative body into a convenient tool. The game is up.

The United States is well aware that, by withdrawing from the nuclear deal in May 2018, reinstating its unilateral sanctions against Tehran and hindering the implementation of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) by other countries, it had jettisoned the international norms expressed in the relevant decisions of the Security Council and the Charter of the United Nations. Now the United States is trying to get everyone to look at Iran and the Plan of Action through "Made in USA" augmented reality glasses, but the world is not an American computer game.

The United States has dealt a serious blow to the authority of the Security Council through its unprincipled actions in contravention of the Plan of Action and Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and its blatant disregard for Security Council decisions and for international law generally. This is unacceptable not only to the Russian Federation, but also to the other members of the Security Council. It should therefore come as no surprise that this attempt by the United States to illegally reinstate the old Security Council sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran has failed.

The members of the Security Council made it abundantly clear in August that the aspirations of the United States in this regard were legally or procedurally inadmissible. In particular, they have made it clear that the letter of 20 August by Secretary of State of the United States, Michael Pompeo, underpinning Washington's position, does not constitute a notification according to Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and cannot be used to trigger the mechanism for reimposing old resolutions. The conclusion arrived at in the open debate on 25 August was that the letter received from the United States could not serve as the basis for any actions. This position was reiterated in September. The Russian Federation shares it wholeheartedly.

To claim that the sanctions resolutions on Iran have been reinstated is to engage in magical thinking. We hope that our American colleagues will have the courage to finally face the truth and refrain from speaking on behalf of the Security Council. The

illegitimate initiatives and actions of the United States cannot, by definition, have international legal implications for other countries or obligate them to restrict their legal cooperation with Iran.

Efforts to preserve and ensure the sustainable implementation of the Plan of Action will continue. Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) remains in force, unchanged, and the commitments arising from it must be implemented in the manner and to the extent initially agreed, on the basis of the principle of reciprocity by all States.

The United States should immediately abandon its efforts aimed at ruining the Plan of Action and undermining Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) rather than aggravate the situation further.
