



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 reference to the letter dated 10 August 2021 from the representatives of France, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General ([S/2021/724](#)).

As in the past, the authors, by invoking the non-consensual and non-universally agreed definitions of the Missile Technology Control Regime, citing terminated Security Council resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#) and relevant outdated reports, even in completely different contexts, and disseminating technical disinformation and similar methods, have attempted to establish a possible link between paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the launches by the Islamic Republic of 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.

On numerous occasions, the Islamic Republic of Iran has made it crystal clear 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. Paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) is crystal clear and needs no interpretation.

Contrary to the claims made in the above-mentioned letter, that paragraph does not concern the space launch vehicles for a number of reasons: first, there is no explicit reference to “space launch vehicles” therein; second, space launch vehicles do not incorporate technologies identical to “ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”; third, space launch vehicles, which are exclusively designed to place satellites into orbit, are not “designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”; and fourth, space launch vehicles are not capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

The Security Council must bear in mind the exact provisions and the context of its resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), including the negotiating history and, in particular, the *raison d’être* of the inclusion of the phrase “designed to be” in paragraph 3 of annex B to the resolution, as well as the subsequent practice of the Council itself in dealing with the implementation of that paragraph.

It must be recalled that paragraph 9 of already terminated resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#), which reads “decides that Iran shall not undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons”, was used as the first version



of paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), and after substantive modifications during the negotiations, including with the participation of the authors of the abovesaid letter, the final version of paragraph 3 was concluded, which reads “Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”.

Besides other changes, the addition of the phrase “designed to be” to the phrase “capable of delivering nuclear weapons” used in resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#) was a deliberate yet substantive 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 authors of the above-mentioned letter, as if such a completely substantive qualifier does not exist in paragraph 3 at all.

It must be recalled that, in the very first paragraph of the preface and paragraph iii of the preamble and general provisions of annex A to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), “Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons”. This principled position of Iran was welcomed by the Council in that resolution.

Additionally, in its statement issued following the adoption of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), the Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejected weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and reiterated the sublime Islamic teachings as well as the relevant views and practices of the late founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, and the historic fatwa of the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, declaring that “it has always been the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to prohibit the acquisition, production, stockpiling or use of nuclear weapons” (see [S/2015/550](#)). This assertion remains valid.

With regard to the subsequent practice of the Council in dealing with the implementation of paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), 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](#)).

In order to establish a possible link between the provisions of paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the launches by Iran of ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles, the authors of the aforesaid letter have, once again, invoked the definitions of the Missile Technology Control Regime, including by portraying them as the universally agreed definition. It must be stressed that there is no implicit or explicit reference in that paragraph either to the Missile Technology Control Regime itself or to its definitions. Therefore, any reference thereto is totally inaccurate and misleading.

Moreover, the Missile Technology Control Regime is an exclusive “informal political understanding” among only 35 States, and its criteria are not legally binding, even for its members. Accordingly, any attempt to portray them as the universally agreed definition is clearly unprofessional, deceptive and suspicious.

Likewise, references made in that communication to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) and an outdated report of a panel of experts are not only unprofessional but also totally misleading. It appears that the authors of that letter have attempted, through accusing Iran of allegedly conducting activities inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), to divert attention from their own non-compliance with their

explicit legal obligations under that resolution, in particular in the economic, trade and financial fields.

Instead of such unprofessional, provocative and irresponsible conduct and instead of raising politically motivated baseless allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to the implementation of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), the respective Governments of the authors of that letter must comply, fully and genuinely, with all their respective legal obligations under that resolution, including by refraining from any actions that undermine the implementation of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), particularly its annex A.

In the light of the above, while categorically rejecting all unsubstantiated allegations made in the aforesaid letter and reemphasizing that Iran has not conducted any activity inconsistent with resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), I would like to stress once again that Iran is determined to resolutely continue its activities related to ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles, both of which are within its inherent rights under international law and are necessary for preserving its security as well as its socioeconomic interests.

We also warn against the politically motivated approach taken by certain developed countries with space programmes, which, under absurd pretexts like proliferation concerns, attempt to demonize the use of space technology for peaceful purposes by developing countries. This hypocritical approach seriously runs the risk of endangering the exercise of the inherent right of States to access space and celestial bodies, their freedom in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and their free access to space science, technologies and their applications without discrimination of any kind.

In this context, I would like to refer to General Assembly resolution [74/82](#), which states that “space science and technology and their applications, including satellite communications, Earth observation systems and satellite navigation technologies, provide indispensable tools for viable long-term solutions for sustainable development and can contribute more effectively to efforts to promote the development of all countries and regions of the world”.

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