

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
On “Non-Proliferation: implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)”
Before the United Nations Security Council
New York, 22 December 2020

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. President,

Almost four months after the failed United States’ move to destroy the JCPOA, the Security Council is again considering the implementation of resolution 2231 and the JCPOA.

According to resolution 2231, the JCPOA was concluded as “a comprehensive, long-term and proper solution to the Iranian nuclear issue” in order “to build a new relationship with Iran” and to promote and facilitate “normal economic and trade contacts and cooperation with Iran”.

The JCPOA is an agreement coming out of hard-won negotiations involving difficult gives and takes, and any proposal for its revision, renegotiation or extension will be against resolution 2231 and absolutely not acceptable to Iran.

After its withdrawal from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, the U.S. re-imposed all its nuclear-related sanctions, and since then, by pursuing a hostile policy towards the JCPOA and Iran, has conducted persistent widespread public and private harassment of Iran’s business partners.

By so doing, the U.S. has committed multiple cases of “significant non-performance” under the JCPOA and as such is in continuous systematic material breach of its legal obligations under resolution 2231, the UN Charter and international law.

Likewise, by brazenly threatening other States to either violate resolution 2231 or face punishment, the U.S. has not only failed to honor its own commitments under that resolution, but has also substantively obstructed the implementation of commitments by other Member States.

The U.S. has also defied the unanimously issued order of the International Court of Justice on 3 October 2018, which includes an obligation to remove impediments to humanitarian trade with Iran.

However, instead of taking any remedial measures authorized in the JCPOA, Iran, upon the E3’s request, exercised restraint and strategic patience for one year.

Nevertheless, our maximum restraint was responded to with the so-called “maximum pressure” of the U.S. and its ever-increasing unlawful sanctions as well as the utter failure of the E3/EU to implement their commitments.

This left us with no choice but to take certain remedial steps in full conformity with the JCPOA’s paragraphs 26 and 36, according to which, in case of “a re-introduction or re-imposition of the sanctions”, Iran has the right “to cease performing its commitments ...in whole or in part”.

Therefore, Iran’s steps are in full accordance with our rights and commitments under the JCPOA, and more importantly, are completely reversible.

However, the damages and sufferings inflicted upon Iran are almost absolutely irreversible.

In the last four years, the U.S. has imposed over 1500 sanctions against Iran, targeting almost all sectors of our economy and cutting almost all dividends of Iran from the JCPOA.

Such sanctions, which are expected to increase even up to the very last minute of the current U.S. administration in office, is in fact an all-out war wherein the economic means have replaced weapons.

According to the U.S. officials, the objective of sanctions is the “starvation” of the Iranian people through weaponizing food and medicine, which is prohibited even in wartime.

Sanctions prevent the import of humanitarian goods, including vital medicines and medical equipment needed for patients particularly those with rare or complicated diseases. At a time when Iran is experiencing one of the worst outbreaks of COVID-19, sanctions are drastically hindering our national response to the pandemic.

The U.S.’ claim that humanitarian goods are exempt from sanctions is an absolute lie. As an example, even today, we cannot easily import medicine for relieving the breathing problems of those injured by chemical weapons which were provided by some western countries to Saddam and used by him during his aggression against Iran.

The U.S. also claims that sanctions are “not directed at the people of Iran”. This is also a sheer hypocrisy as sanctions target the most vulnerable people the most, harm the poor more than the rich, the ill people more than the healthy ones, and infants and children more than adults.

Sanctions do not merely create economic hardships; in many cases, sanctions claim the innocent lives of people from all walks of life.

By any measure, the U.S. sanctions are illegal, illegitimate, immoral, inhumane and oppressive, and have no designation other than economic terrorism and crime against humanity.

Yet, sanctions are only one part of the destructive bullying policies and practices of the U.S. against my country, which include its systematic Iranophobia campaign, warmongering, military adventurism in the Persian Gulf, interference in our domestic affairs and many other unlawful and provocative actions.

The living example of this bankrupt policy is the horrific assassination of martyr Qasem Soleimani almost one year ago. This terrorist act, conducted at the direct order of the U.S. President, is a gross violation of international law.

There are also serious indications that the assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh, a prominent Iranian scientist, on 27 November 2020, was conducted by the Israeli regime -- the closest regional ally of the United States with a long dark record of such terrorist acts against the Iranian nuclear scientists in the past.

During the past four years, the U.S. and its regional allies have, through a series of orchestrated measures, employed all possible means including illegitimate and unlawful measures to destroy the JCPOA.

As an example, you, Mr. President, and distinguished Council members witnessed this summer how stubbornly the U.S. attempted to abuse the process of the Council and the provisions of resolution 2231 to extend the arms related provisions of that resolution.

However, even when the U.S.' proposed draft resolution, in addition to U.S. itself, received only one more affirmative vote, the U.S. did not stop its destructive policy and unsuccessfully attempted, through abusing the so-called snapback mechanism, to destroy the JCPOA and 2231 mechanism altogether.

This time, none of the Council members supported the U.S. request and more importantly, 13 members of the Council rejected it orally and in writing and consequently, two consecutive Presidents of the Council stated that they were not in a position to take any action with regard to the U.S. claims. Hence, the U.S. move faced a total defeat in the Council.

The U.S. is now desperately attempting to raise the same issue in the UNGA's Fifth Committee. This unlawful move aims to establish and fund a Security Council sanction regime without a Council mandate. The UN Member States are expected not to allow UN mechanisms to be misused and, if needed, vote against U.S. proposals on the program budget of the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 for 2021.

Once again, I sincerely thank members of the Council for their valuable support. Your votes and voices were not merely in support of the JCPOA as a historic achievement of diplomacy, but were a strong support for multilateralism and rule of law and a loud and clear no to unilateralism and bullying.

The continuation of such support is critical for ensuring the full and unconditional implementation of resolution 2231 and the JCPOA by all its participants.

As the arms and travel related provisions of resolution 2231, consistent with the established timelines in the resolution, were terminated on 18 October 2020, all other provisions of resolution must be implemented and terminated according to the timelines identified therein.

Iran has paid a heavy price and has done much more than its fair share to preserve the JCPOA. Therefore, no one can expect us to do more.

In fact, those JCPOA participants who have for years violated their commitments under resolution 2231 and the JCPOA must bear more responsibility.

Iran has been implementing its commitments under the JCPOA. However, the illegal U.S. sanctions as well as the E3's non-compliance with their JCPOA commitments have not only deprived Iran from its benefits foreseen in the JCPOA, that is, to enjoy normal economic and trade relations with others, but have also inflicted severe damages and sufferings upon our economy and people.

The so-called maximum pressure policy of the U.S. against Iran has faced with our maximum resistance and has not been able to bring us to our knees as the U.S. officials have been dreaming.

It should have been clear by now that the policy of intimidation and pressure on Iran does not and will not yield any result. The only way out is to go back to the prompt, full and unconditional implementation of JCPOA.

As has been clearly stated by our officials, as soon as all JCPOA participants start implementing their commitments unconditionally, effectively and in full, Iran will also resume implementing all its JCPOA commitments.

This has always been our principled position throughout the recent years and now it has become a binding legal obligation for the Government following the recent adoption of a new law by our Parliament.

The JCPOA cannot be linked to any other issues as the agenda of the nuclear talks from the beginning was the nuclear issue. We decided not to allow other issues to complicate the already difficult negotiations. That was a very wise decision made by all JCPOA participants. Therefore, any attempt now to link the future of JCPOA to extraneous issues will doom to fail.

We have on numerous occasions made our position on the defensive capabilities of our country quite clear. To develop a conventional missile program is an inherent right of any country under international law and Iran is no exception. Consequently, Iran will not negotiate its legitimate ballistic missile program.

Living in such a volatile region as the Middle East, we will not allow our security and conventional defensive capability be compromised, restricted or undermined. Bullying policies of certain powers will not intimidate Iran to relinquish its legitimate defensive means.

The only source of instability and insecurity in our region is the presence of a large number of American forces in almost all Iran's neighboring countries, the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea as well as the flow of unprecedented amounts of the most sophisticated weaponry by the U.S. and other Western countries to this region. The U.S. must leave our region immediately.

The Persian Gulf region has been suffering from many years of foreign intervention and conflicts. This region is turned into a powder keg as a result of unfettered flow of dangerous weapons from Western countries. In order to sell more weapons to this region, these countries sow discord and apply a divide and rule policy among countries in the region.

It is high time for regional countries to engage in good faith and work toward the establishment of a better, safer and more prosperous region. Our Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE) is a recipe for bringing regional countries closer to each other with the aim of resolving their differences and establishing friendlier relations among them. We hope that our honest and sincere call for opening a new page in regional cooperation will be heeded by our neighbors in the Persian Gulf soon.

Finally, our observations on Secretary-General's report are contained in my letter already sent to the Council covering our views on issues that I did not address in my remarks today.

I thank you, Mr. President.