

UNSC Rejection of US Resolution to Extend Arms Embargo on Iran a Grave Security Concern

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WASHINGTON, Aug 22, 2020 -- On August 14, the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) rejected an effort by the United States to extend a conventional-arms embargo imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The international agreement to ban Iran from purchasing or selling arms was intended to target sales of certain weapons by and to Iran (including aircrafts and tanks) and was originally imposed on an indefinite basis beginning in 2007. Time limits were only imposed as part of the 2015 nuclear accord known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Should world leaders fail to act on Iran's noncompliance with its existing security commitments, the accord, affirmed under UNSC Resolution 2231, is set to expire on October 18.

Last week, the United States formally requested that the United Nations restore all UN imposed sanctions on Iran and called for a "snapback" of international sanctions. "As a result, the United States is left with no choice but to notify the council that Iran is in significant non-performance of its JCPOA commitments," US Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft wrote.

A letter from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (collectively known as the E3) argued that the United States could not trigger "snapback" but acknowledged Iran's general noncompliance under UNSC 2231. The letter states: "The E3 are determined to bring adequate answers to these challenges and will continue to work with all UNSC members and stakeholders to seek a path forward that preserves space for further diplomacy."

In the interest of peace and security, the Iran Policy Committee (IPC) calls on the leaders of the international community to support US requests to trigger the "snapback" mechanism despite the US withdrawal from the earlier 2015 agreement.

IPC has long documented the Islamic Republic's malign activities and nefarious influence. By threatening the world and its own citizens, exporting fundamentalism, enabling proxy violence, disregarding human rights, suppressing civil liberties, embracing corruption, and strangling the

marketplace, Tehran's leaders pose a grave and continued threat to regional peace and security.

IPC president and Iran policy scholar, Professor Ivan Sascha Sheehan, observes that: "Lifting the arms embargo on Iran under the current circumstances is as unwise as it is unnecessary. Restoring all of the prior UN sanctions is critical to curtailing the regime's illicit operations and defiant pursuit of weapons. Allowing JCPOA sunset provisions to begin taking effect will only undermine the maximum pressure campaign that has given hope to the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people. It is a certain path to regional instability."

Iran's officials have already vowed to promptly restock their arsenal after sanctions are removed. Iran's Minister of Defense, Brigadier General Amir Hatami, said last Sunday that Iran "will use all capacities in the world to meet its arms requirements, selling and exporting weapons after sanctions removal." In addition, Abbas Mousavi, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, recently noted that the country intends to export weapons immediately after the blockage lapses.

IPC expresses its strong support for the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people and their organized opposition and acknowledges the Iranian people's desire to topple the religious dictatorship that rules over them. With record numbers of Iranians participating in three nationwide uprisings against the clerical regime in just the past two and a half years, there has arguably never been a more critical time to be united in confronting Tehran.

In this defining moment, the community of nations – and particularly the E3 – must speak with one voice against Iran's ruling theocracy by triggering the "snapback" mechanism. Doing so will exert pressure on Iran's repressive institutions and uphold regional peace and security interests.

SOURCE: Iran Policy Committee

The Iran Policy Committee, established in 2005, is a nonpartisan Washington, DC-based research institute focused on U.S. policy toward Iran. For more than fifteen years, IPC has produced actionable research and timely analyses for U.S. officials in the legislative and executive branches, convened briefings on urgent policy matters, and prompted a closer examination of the prospect of regime change by the Iranian people.

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