



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

Provisional

8695th meeting

Thursday, 19 December 2019, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mrs. Craft/Mr. Barkin (United States of America)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Trullols Yabra
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Aljarallah
Peru	Mr. Ugarelli
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
South Africa	Mr. Van Shalkwyk
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

Non-proliferation

Letter dated 4 December 2019 from the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/925)

Eighth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2019/934)

Letter dated 16 December 2019 from the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/952/Rev.1)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation

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The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Mr. Skoog and Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Permanent Representative of Belgium, in his capacity as Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015).

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting on non-proliferation, which remains a cornerstone of international peace and security and a top priority for the international community.

In that regard, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA,) on the Iranian nuclear issue, and resolution 2231 (2015) are crucial to nuclear non-proliferation as well as regional and international security. We are encouraged by the broad international support for the Plan and the resolution. Their full and effective implementation is key to ensuring the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and to securing tangible economic benefits for the Iranian people.

We therefore regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, in May 2018, and the recent steps taken by Iran to reduce its nuclear-related commitments under the plan. Certain actions taken by the United States since its withdrawal from the plan are contrary to the goals of the plan. The reimposition of its national sanctions, lifted under the plan, as well as its decision not to extend waivers for the trade in oil with Iran and certain non-proliferation projects, may also impede the ability of Iran and other Member States to implement the plan and resolution 2231 (2015).

Since July, under the monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has surpassed JCPOA-stipulated limits on its uranium enrichment level, as well as limits on its stockpiles of heavy water and low-enriched uranium. It has taken steps related to centrifuge research and development, and commenced injecting uranium hexafluoride gas into the centrifuges at the Fordow facility. Iran has stated that all those steps are reversible and that it intends to remain in the plan. It is important that Iran return to full implementation of the plan and refrain from further steps to reduce its commitments.

We welcome the initiatives of the other participants in the JCPOA, which should be given full effect as a matter of priority. In that regard, the recent decisions by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway to join the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges are positive developments. Those actions can contribute to the goals of facilitating legitimate business with Iran and the preservation of the plan. The Secretary-General encourages Member States and others to work with JCPOA participants to achieve those important goals. At the same time, Iran should carefully consider and address the concerns expressed by Member States about its activities in relation to the restrictive measures set out in annex B to the resolution.

Over the course of this year, tensions in the region have, worryingly, escalated. We witnessed attacks

against oil tankers, strikes against a civilian airport and a highly sophisticated and synchronized attack against oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. Combined with acrimonious rhetoric, those developments have brought the region dangerously close to a serious confrontation. Such an eventuality would be devastating and must be prevented at all costs. The Secretary-General continues to call on Member States to exercise maximum restraint and prevent further escalation amid heightened tensions.

I will now turn to the measures set out in annex B to the resolution, as outlined in the Secretary-General's eighth report (S/2019/934) on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and subsequent information obtained during the reporting period.

First, on the implementation of the nuclear-related provisions, we have not received new reports on the supply, sale or transfer to Iran of nuclear and nuclear-related dual-use items contrary to paragraph 2 of annex B. It is vital that the procurement channel work effectively and efficiently to promote increased international engagement with Iran. All Member States and the private sector are encouraged to fully utilize and support that channel.

In that connection, we recall the 3 May 2018 announcement by the United States that involvement in certain nuclear-related activities set forth in paragraph 2 of annex B may be exposed to its national sanctions. We also note the announcement by the United States that, effective 15 December, it will terminate the sanctions waiver related to the nuclear facility at Fordow. Exemption provisions in resolution 2231 (2015) allow for the transfer of items, materials, equipment, goods and technology required for the nuclear activities of Iran under the plan, subject to the relevant notification requirements.

Secondly, several Member States have provided divergent views on Iran's test-firing of ballistic missiles during the reporting period, as well as a reportedly failed launch of a space-launch vehicle in August. Paragraph 3 of annex B calls upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology.

France, Germany, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States viewed the missiles reportedly launched by Iran to be category I systems under the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and are therefore designed to be capable of delivering nuclear

weapons. By contrast, Iran and the Russian Federation stressed the lack of any reference to the MTCR regime in paragraph 3 of annex B. They further stated that Iran's ballistic missile activities were not inconsistent with paragraph 3, as those missiles were not designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Related to ballistic missiles activities, the Secretariat also received information from the United States that several shipments of hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene, a substance that can be used in solid missile fuel, were transferred to Iran in July and August 2017. We are examining that information and will update the Council accordingly.

Thirdly, regarding arms-related restrictions, the Secretariat confirmed that 23 optical sights for RPG-7-type rocket propelled grenade launchers, part of a larger consignment seized in Aden in December 2018, were delivered to end-users in Iran in 2016. That suggests that those optical sights may have been transferred from Iran to Yemen after 16 January 2016, which would be inconsistent with Iran's obligations under resolution 2231 (2015). We had already indicated in our previous report (S/2019/492) that the grenade launchers found in that seizure had characteristics similar to the Iranian-produced RPG-7-type launchers, such as markings and heat shields.

Further on the arms restrictive measures, the Secretariat — at the invitation of Saudi authorities — examined the debris of the weapons system used in the 14 May attack on the oil facility in Afif, the 12 June and 10 August attacks on the Abha international airport and the 14 September attack on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais.

Although the Houthis claimed responsibility for the attacks on Abqaiq and Khurais, their announcements on the number and type of weapons systems used do not correspond to the information that we have seen. The Houthis claimed that the attacks involved 10 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). However, the number of impact points observed by the Secretariat shows that the attacks involved a larger number, and different types, of weapons systems — which is consistent with the information provided by Saudi authorities. According to them, the attacks involved at least 18 UAVs and seven cruise missiles. In addition, since the publication of the report, the United States has shared additional information with us regarding the debris of one of the UAVs, which indicated that that UAV traversed a

location about 200 kilometres north-west of Abqaiq shortly before the strike.

At this time, we are unable to independently corroborate that the cruise missiles, or the recovered components we inspected, are of Iranian origin. I would like to stress, however, that that is our preliminary finding. We are still very much in the process of reviewing the components and subcomponents recovered, as well as collecting and analysing additional information on those cruise missiles. For example, we recently received confirmation that some of the cruise missile components were in fact not made by the identified manufacturers, but could have been copies. The Secretary-General intends to report back to the Security Council on our further findings.

Regarding the UAVs, the Houthis in Yemen are not known to be in possession of the specific delta wing-type UAVs used in those attacks. The UAVs were found to be equipped with a type of vertical gyroscope that had been observed on an Iranian UAV reportedly recovered in Afghanistan in 2016. Parts of the UAVs were also produced and transferred between Member States after 16 January 2016, and as recently as 2018. Based on our preliminary assessment, the Secretary-General is also unable to independently corroborate that the UAVs, or the recovered components we examined, are of Iranian origin. As with the cruise missiles, the Secretariat is still actively reviewing the components and subcomponents recovered, as well as collecting and analysing additional information on those UAVs. The Secretary-General intends to report back on our further findings.

In addition, I would like to bring to everyone's attention to the arms-related information that had become available since the publication of the Secretary-General's report. At the invitation of the United States, the Secretariat travelled to examine arms and related materiel alleged to be of Iranian origin, which the United States seized in international waters off the coast of Yemen on 25 November 2019. The seized items included anti-tank guided missiles, surface-to-air missiles, as well as parts of cruise missiles and anti-ship missiles. The anti-tank guided missiles that we saw had production dates as recent as 2018. Their container-launch units also had characteristics consistent with the Iranian-produced Dehlavieh anti-tank guided missile. We had made a similar observation of other anti-tank guided missile container-launch units seized in Yemen in our sixth report (S/2018/1089) to the Council. The

Secretariat is still reviewing the information and will report back to the Council with additional details.

Finally, we were informed of additional travel allegedly undertaken by the Commander of the Al-Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Major General Qasem Soleimani, to Iraq in October 2019. We also were informed of alleged cooperation between a Member State's academic institution with an entity on the 2231 list, as well as several ongoing cooperation agreements in the construction sector between foreign entities and other entities on the list. The Secretariat has requested clarification from Member States and will report back to the Council.

The Secretary-General considers the full implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) by all Member States as an integral component of our collective prevention efforts. That has assumed greater importance in the context of current tensions in the Gulf. The Secretary-General therefore calls on Member States to avoid confrontational actions and explore avenues for dialogue and cooperation in the interest of international peace and security.

Let me conclude by acknowledging the leadership of His Excellency Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve in his role as Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and to assure him once again of our full support. I would also like to thank the Coordinator of the Procurement Working Group of the Joint Commission for our continued cooperation.

The President: I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Skoog.

Mr. Skoog: It is an honour to back in the Security Council, now in my new capacity as Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the United Nations. I address the Council today on behalf of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Joint Commission established by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). I would also like to extend my gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres and Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Ambassador of Belgium serving as Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), for the great collaboration over the past months. In addition, I would like to convey my deep appreciation for the work done by colleagues in

the Secretariat, including in relation to the procurement channel — as just mentioned by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo — and work to prepare the latest report (S/2019/934) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution.

Today we are witnessing a major challenge, as the JCPOA is under increasing pressure. We have a responsibility, as members of the international community, to prevent it from falling apart. The remaining parties to the JCPOA at the latest Joint Commission meeting, on 6 December, emphasized the key importance of full and effective implementation by all sides, as well as their determination to pursue all efforts to preserve the agreement. The reasons are clear, and it is important to remember where we were before the JCPOA.

The plan rolled back Iran's nuclear programme, set strict limitations, blocking Iran's access to plutonium and high-enriched uranium, and established the most robust verification mechanism by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Once the JCPOA was agreed upon, more than four years ago, Iran fully complied with the nuclear-related provisions for three and a half years, including for 14 months after the United States withdrew from the plan and reimposed unilateral sanctions. That has been verified and reported by the IAEA through the Agency's robust monitoring mechanism on the Iranian nuclear programme.

However, earlier this year, Iran decided to embark on a worrisome path of decreasing its nuclear-related commitments. That is something that the European Union deeply regrets, and we strongly urge Iran to change its course of action. The JCPOA is a nuclear non-proliferation agreement with obligations on all parties. Alongside the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments, the lifting of sanctions that allows for the normalization of trade and economic relations with Iran constitute essential parts of the JCPOA.

In that regard, the European Union and all 28 member States deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement. The United States subsequent reimposition of unilateral sanctions and its decision not to extend waivers with regard to trade in oil are having a significant impact on Iran's economy. In addition, the United States decision not to fully renew waivers for nuclear non-proliferation projects could bear significant security implications.

The EU expresses its strong support for the continuation of key nuclear non-proliferation projects that are an essential part of the JCPOA. We welcome continued efforts by the Arak Working Group co-Chairs — China and the United Kingdom — in taking the Arak modernization project forward. We also welcome the efforts of Russia to continue the implementation of the project at Fordow for the production of medical stable isotopes.

The European Union, for its part, lifted its sanctions in line with its JCPOA obligations. It remains committed to work on the preservation of the agreement, including towards the objective of normalizing economic and trade relations with Iran. We welcome the fact that efforts have been intensified in recent weeks, particularly on the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), with a view to facilitating legitimate trade with Iran, consistent with international laws and European regulations, as well as to support the needs of the Iranian population. We welcome the decision announced on 29 November by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden to become shareholders of INSTEX along with the original shareholders, namely, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

The JCPOA is a key element of the new global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, and we should not forget that it was unanimously endorsed by resolution 2231 (2015). It is the only tool available to provide the international community with the necessary assurances on Iran's nuclear programme. It is essential that we continue to preserve this tool and not let it derail into an irreparable situation. That is why the EU continues to be resolutely committed to the JCPOA. We continue to support it and are determined to work with the international community to preserve it. We should not assume that another opportunity will be presented to the international community to address Iran's nuclear programme in such a thorough manner as the one presented by the JCPOA. The EU has been consistent in its commitment to the continued full and effective implementation of the Agreement, as long as Iran abides by its commitments. That has been repeated in numerous statements.

The course of action taken by Iran to reduce its nuclear-related commitments is deeply worrisome. In a statement on 11 November, together with the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, the High Representative of the European Union

expressed extreme concern about the latest step taken by Iran with regard to restarting uranium enrichment activities at Fordow.

A number of projects are being implemented in support of annex III of the JCPOA, on civil nuclear cooperation, particularly in the field of nuclear safety and regulatory support. Annex III helps us to gain a better understanding of Iran's nuclear needs and gradually build confidence in Iran's programme. It also plays a significant role for Iran, as it balances the limitations of the nuclear programme with civil nuclear development and longer-term engagement.

Established under annex IV of the JCPOA, the procurement channel remains a unique non-proliferation, transparency and confidence-building instrument. It is a key mechanism to prevent the misuse of nuclear and dual-use items and to ensure that exports of such items are consistent with the JCPOA. We recognize the challenges brought about by the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of sanctions. The procurement channel, however, remains a Security Council mechanism, and the decision on a proposal for transfer is endorsed by all its 15 members. In the eighth Joint Commission report on the status of the Procurement Working Group's decisions and on any implementation issues, submitted to the Facilitator on 4 December and subsequently circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/2019/925), the remaining participants stated their commitment to continue reviewing proposals in an impartial and independent manner. In that context, it is a positive signal that the channel keeps receiving proposals, albeit at a decreased pace. A substantial amount of outreach has been conducted during the past few years, and countries around the world are aware of the procedures of the channel. Our outreach efforts will continue, together with colleagues from the Secretariat and the Facilitator. We expect that all Security Council members will continue supporting the channel's preservation in line with resolution 2231 (2015).

While the JCPOA addresses nuclear non-proliferation aspects, a series of events outside the nuclear domain are increasingly worrisome. The EU continues to urge all actors to reduce tension, refrain from escalatory rhetoric and prevent a military build-up in the region. The European Union has repeatedly urged Iran to refrain from activities that could deepen mistrust, such as ballistic missile tests, which are inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015).

The EU is a strong promoter of multilateral diplomacy and continues to advocate for dialogue and constructive engagement. It is thanks to the JCPOA that the EU has been able to hold discussions with Iran on the situation in the region. The EU-led discussions, together with France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, focus on exchanging views with Iran on regional stability. That dialogue, as well as other channels of communications between the European Union and Iran, continues to be a useful platform for discussions on shared interest and concern. The absence of direct channels of communication might easily lead to spaces where the risk of misunderstandings and miscalculations thrives.

Let us not forget what the purpose of the JCPOA is: it is a nuclear non-proliferation agreement. Let us not forget what it has been able to deliver: it kept Iran fully compliant with its nuclear-related commitments for three and a half years. Let us not forget that there is no credible, peaceful alternative. That is why the EU, together with other partners of the international community, will continue to work relentlessly to preserve the JCPOA while calling on Iran to reverse its course of action.

The President: I thank Mr. Skoog for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Pecsteen de Buytswerve.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I speak in my capacity as Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). I would like to begin by thanking the Secretariat for its valuable support in the discharge of my duties.

Throughout my mandate, my mission has been to support the implementation of the resolution on behalf of the Security Council, with a special focus on three particular areas, namely, dialogue, transparency and the maintenance of the procurement channel. Of course, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is currently faced by many challenges.

I now turn to the eighth report of the Facilitator (see S/2019/952/Rev.1). The report has been approved by all the members of the Council, whom I would like to thank for their constructive contributions. The report of the Facilitator is essentially a factual account, the objective of which is to inform the Council, in parallel

with the reports of the Secretary-General (S/2019/934) and of the Joint Commission (see S/2019/925), of the activities that took place in the 2231 format. The report covers the activities that took place between 16 June and 16 December 2019, some of which gave rise to disagreements within the Council and are presented as such. As the text is rather technical in nature, I will not review all its constituent elements. My report is at Council members' disposal for reference and information. Nevertheless, allow me to highlight the following three points.

First, I would like to recall the two meetings of the Council held in the 2231 format during the reporting period. On 26 July, members of the Security Council discussed a proposal by the United States to maintain and update the individuals and entities on the list established pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015). That proposal led to disagreements relating to the procedures for updating the list. On 13 December, the members of the Security Council discussed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the eighth report of the Secretary-General on resolution 2231 (2015), prior to its public release.

Secondly, in my role as Facilitator, I also held several bilateral consultations with Member States and their representatives, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, to discuss issues related to the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). Informal consultations with the members of the Security Council concerned were also held with a view to reaching consensus on the text of my report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Council for their flexibility in that regard.

Thirdly, there are references in my report to the two regular quarterly reports issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during the reporting period, in August (see S/2019/737) and November (see S/2019/901). The six additional reports issued by the Agency during the period are also listed (see S/2019/952/Rev.1, para. 12). Those reports cover the latest developments in the implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its nuclear commitments, notably in the following areas: enriched uranium stockpile; enrichment activities; centrifuge research and development activities; activities related to the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant; and heavy water inventory. I cannot overestimate the central, impartial, factual and professional role played by the Agency in the implementation of the JCPOA as it continues to

carry out its verification and monitoring activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran in line with resolution 2231 (2015).

More generally, I have to conclude that the JCPOA is at a crossroads. The various letters circulated within the 2231 format reflect the state of the discussions among the parties. The communications are listed and summarized in detail in my report, including the responses from the Permanent Mission of Iran. The points of disagreement regarding the restrictive measures outlined in annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) are also indicated.

First, concerning Iran's activities related to missiles and space launchers, I note the various letters sent by several Member States describing those activities as incompatible with annex B, on the one hand, and Iran's counter-arguments, which are based on a different reading of paragraph 3 of that annex, on the other. The differences in the interpretation of paragraph 3 are a recurring issue. Other letters focused on possible Iranian arms transfers in the region, which are another source of disagreement.

The current context of compliance with the entire JCPOA obviously affects activities in the 2231 format. I note the concerns that have been expressed following the strengthening of the economic sanctions imposed by the United States since its withdrawal from the plan, and more recently the end of nuclear exemptions, which has had an impact on compliance with resolution 2231 (2015), originally adopted unanimously by the Council. Those concerns also extend to the successive disengagements announced and implemented by Iran and duly reported by the IAEA.

Lastly, I note that no proposals were submitted through the procurement channel for the Security Council's approval during the reporting period. The procurement channel is definitely at the heart of the JCPOA and must be able to continue operating effectively and efficiently in order to fulfil its role.

In conclusion, I join with the other bodies responsible for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), the Secretary-General and the Joint Commission in deploring the deterioration of the current context, which affects compliance with resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA. Matters of international peace and security require collective responses, which is the *raison d'être* of the Council. The JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015) constitute one of those responses and enjoy

the support of the international community. In reference to paragraph 2 of resolution 2231 (2015), I therefore call on all

“Member States, regional organizations and international organizations to take such actions as may be appropriate to support the implementation of the JCPOA, including by ... refraining from actions that undermine the implementation of commitments under the JCPOA.”

The President: I thank Ambassador Pecsteen de Buytswerve for his briefing.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/934) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). We note the work of the Permanent Representative of Belgium as Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of the resolution's provisions. We welcome the new Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, although I must say that I am used to seeing him here in a different capacity.

We share the Secretary-General's position on the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the reimposition of unilateral sanctions against Iran, which are contrary to the aims of both the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015) and undermine Iran's ability to comply with their provisions. The current report constitutes clear evidence of Washington's violations of its obligations under resolution 2231 (2015), specifically its paragraphs 1, 2 and 7, and under Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that those actions should be condemned as well as deplored by the international community. We are in effect encountering the paradoxical situation in which a permanent member of the Security Council is not only failing to comply with a resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, among other things,

but is actively threatening all other Member States with unilateral sanctions for implementing the resolution's provisions. We do not quite understand how it is possible to strengthen international peace and security by directly undermining Security Council resolutions. Using sanctions as a stick in a blanket response to any concern not only does not work but spawns new crises.

Iran cannot be expected to meekly comply with Council resolutions that the United States itself is undermining. Iran has a legal right, enshrined in paragraph 36 of the JCPOA, to take measures in response to United States violations of the Charter or resolution 2231 (2015). Moreover, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been notified about all of Iran's steps to reduce its voluntary obligations and they have been supervised by the Agency's inspectors, in full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Additional Protocol to Iran's Safeguards Agreement. All of those measures are reversible under the entirely logical condition of compliance with the obligations set out under the JCPOA and the Charter.

A fully functioning procurement channel and cooperation with Iran on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes are key elements in the full implementation of both the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015) itself. The work of those non-proliferation mechanisms must not be disrupted. Such actions can have only one aim, which is to create tension around the Iranian nuclear programme and thereby deepen the manifestations of crisis in the Middle East.

Today we are witnessing an artificial escalation of the situation in the Persian Gulf, jeopardizing peace and security in the region as well as the international efforts to settle the conflicts there. The so-called evidence of Iran's guilt that has been provided is neither convincing nor corroborated by the report of the Secretary-General. We believe that there is an alternative to escalation. We have to strengthen the general atmosphere of trust in the region. We want to remind the Council once again that in resolution 598 (1988), the Security Council instructed the Secretary-General to work with the stakeholders in the region to develop measures to strengthen its security and stability. That work is now needed more than ever. Russia is ready to support that by working in contact with our regional partners and all interested parties. The ultimate aim must be to form a genuinely inclusive security architecture that reflects the legitimate concerns of all the countries of the

region. Our concept for strengthening security in the Persian Gulf under international guarantees remains relevant, and its implementation could and should begin with the holding of a conference attended by States of the subregion, with a view to eventually including other Middle Eastern countries. For its part, Tehran has proposed its own initiative for strengthening regional peace and security.

We are sorry to see that the report suffers from a chronic lack of evidence in the parts concerning Iran's missile programme and supposed arms shipments out of Iran, as well as various violations that Tehran is alleged to have permitted of the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015) on asset freezes and travel bans on individuals. The problem of amateur inspections by representatives of the Secretariat who do not have the necessary skills or mandate to conduct them persists. That leads one to ask why, if the Secretariat cannot confirm that there was a violation of resolution 2231 (2015), does it constantly include those subjects in its reports?

The only practical step that can be taken to save the JCPOA is the remaining parties' implementation of their obligations under the agreement. We must abandon fear and selfish motives and prioritize the tasks of maintaining the viability of the JCPOA, which is a vital achievement of multilateral diplomacy. We believe that constantly raising the stakes and one-upping each other about who cares most about the agreement will only result in extreme attitudes. We must not allow political pressure, economic strangulation and blackmail through military might to gain the upper hand.

In conclusion, I would particularly like to emphasize that the Russian Federation remains committed to the unconditional implementation of the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We support the Secretary-General's call in his report for refraining from provocative statements and actions that could have a negative impact on regional stability. We will continue to strive for a dialogue aimed at finding compromises and a balance of interests. That is the only way. Only coordinated collective action can bring the current situation back under control.

Mr. Aljarallah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her comprehensive and valuable briefing

on the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/934) on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). I would also like to thank both the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union, who spoke on behalf of the Joint Commission, for their briefings to the Council.

The agenda item for this meeting is "Non-proliferation", and I would like to reiterate the principled position of the State of Kuwait on all issues relating to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We condemn the use of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction, anywhere, at any time and by any party, since any such use constitutes a grave violation of international law. Peace, security and stability cannot be established in the world while such weapons exist. Five years ago, on the basis of on those principles and fundamental parameters, we welcomed the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2231 (2015), because we believe strongly in multilateralism and are fully committed to all United Nations resolutions, as we are to efforts to achieve security and stability in the Middle East, which continues to suffer from unstable security conditions.

We have read the Secretary-General's eighth report on the annex B provisions of resolution 2231 (2015), which contains a comprehensive summary of the implementation of the resolution's nuclear- and ballistic-missile-related provisions, as well as measures to strengthen it. We took note of the report on Iran's implementation of its commitments relating to its nuclear programme, as verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also noted with concern the Secretary-General's report on the steps taken by Iran since July to reduce its compliance with its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We would like to stress how important it is for Iran to continue implementing all its obligations pursuant to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, as well as to ratify the Additional Protocol to its Agreement so as to ensure its continued status as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Based on the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015), the Secretary-General's report is not limited to the nuclear component but also covers the implementation of controls on activities related to ballistic-missile technology and the transfer of conventional weapons.

We would like to express our concern about some elements in the report, including information and specifications on the origin of the ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles used to target Saudi Arabia and of the weapons seized in international waters. Although the Secretariat has not yet finished its investigations, this remains a very serious issue that poses a threat international peace and security. Based on our position condemning the use of ballistic missiles and drones in September to sabotage and attack Saudi Arabian facilities supplying oil to international markets, we emphasize our firm position on the need to maintain the region's security and stability as well as the safety of its peoples. We further stress the need to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of States and to respect their sovereignty, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law as well as the principles of good-neighbourliness, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use or threat of use of force, and the rejection of all forms of sectarianism.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait reiterates once again how important it is to ensure that the Security Council continues to uphold its responsibilities in pursuing the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) in a comprehensive manner, in order to ensure that Iran and other States comply with their obligations not only with regard to nuclear non-proliferation but also in other areas covered by the resolution.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank the Under-Secretary-General and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union. It is also very good to have our Iranian colleague with us.

We welcome the Secretary-General's eighth report (S/2019/934) on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2014) and we offer our thanks to the Secretariat for its continued professionalism and its support to the Secretary-General in enabling the production of the report.

When I spoke to the Council in June, I said that the United Kingdom remained committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) (see S/PV.8564), and that commitment stands. The JCPOA is critical to the wider global non-proliferation architecture and vital to our national security and the shared security of our partners and allies. We believe it is the best means for averting a nuclear-armed Iran. As we have said before, we regret the decision by the United States to leave

the JCPOA and reimpose sanctions on Iran. We have said that at our most senior levels and on the public record, and we understand the impact this has had in Iran and on the Iranian people. Our commitment to the JCPOA and its instruments, including the procurement channel, is evidenced by our work as co-Chair of the Arak modernization project and with our E-3 partners on the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges. We therefore deeply deplore Iran's decision to reduce compliance with the JCPOA. We made our concerns clear at the Joint Commission on 6 December. Iran's actions are extremely serious. They are hollowing out the non-proliferation benefits of the nuclear deal and not all of them are reversible.

As the United Kingdom, we have made clear our determination to find a way forward and to address Iranian non-compliance through the JCPOA, including the dispute resolution mechanism. That is not a step we want to take, but Iran's actions are leaving us little option other than to respond within the parameters of the agreement. Should we be forced down the path of triggering the dispute resolution mechanism, we would do so in order to find a diplomatic way forward with the aim of protecting the agreement. Iran faces a stark choice. It can either continue down this damaging path or take immediate steps to get back into compliance and rebuild international confidence.

Turning to ballistic missiles, in November the E3—France, Germany and the United Kingdom—wrote to the Secretary-General regarding Iran's development and testing of ballistic missiles and related technology. Over the past year, Iran has tested the Shahab-3 medium-range ballistic missile, unveiled the Burkan-3 medium-range ballistic missile and attempted to launch the Safir satellite launch vehicle. All of these actions are inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B of resolution 2231 (2015). Iran argues that the provisions in resolution 2231 (2015) are not legally binding. It has also taken issue with the E3's use of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) categories to define nuclear-capable missiles.

We should be clear. The definition encapsulated in the MTCR is the most objective, widely accepted standard of nuclear deliverability in the world. It is internationally recognized and observed by States that seek to prevent the proliferation of ballistic-missile technology capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. For many States, it is incorporated into their national legislation. The purpose of the provisions

in annex B, paragraph 3, is to give the international community confidence that Iran is not developing technology capable of serving as a means of delivery for a nuclear weapon. In undertaking the activity described in the E3's communications to the Security Council, Iran is not providing this confidence.

Turning to regional activity, during the last year there has been a continued increase in Iran's destabilizing activity around the Middle East, including activities that are inconsistent with resolution 2216 (2015) and other resolutions. In May and June we saw attacks on commercial shipping near Fujairah and in the Gulf of Oman. A thorough United Kingdom assessment concluded that both attacks were almost certainly the work of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Likewise, the Corps was almost certainly responsible for May's attack on the Yanbu pipeline, near Afif. In September we witnessed a large-scale drone and missile attack against Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. That was a reckless, destabilizing and completely unacceptable attack affecting more than 5 per cent of the world's oil and gas production.

As the United Kingdom, France and Germany have made clear, we are confident that Iran bears responsibility for that attack. The Houthi claim of responsibility is implausible for a number of reasons, not least the scale, sophistication and range of the attack. We note the Secretariat's continued efforts to collect and analyse information on the weapons used in the 14 September attack, and we welcome the Secretariat's observation that the number of impact points at the oil facilities was consistent with the figures provided by Saudi Arabia and inconsistent with Houthi statements. We look forward to hearing the Secretariat's findings in due course.

Iran has also transferred missiles to a number of armed groups, in violation of several Council resolutions, including resolutions 2231 (2015), 2216 (2015) and 1540 (2004). The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/934) details concerning evidence regarding the transfer by Iran into Yemen of unmanned aerial vehicles and optical sights for rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Such proliferation is destabilizing for the region and escalates already high tensions; it should stop.

Current tensions in the region remain deeply concerning, further escalation is in no one's interest. I

want to once again call for de-escalation dialogue and full respect for international rules.

I note the interest of some members of the Council and of Iran in resolution 598 (1987), about regional dialogue. At the right time, and if genuinely intentioned, this may be able to play a useful role, but I think both timing and intent are critical ingredients if any initiative along these lines is to get off the ground in the right way.

We continue to hope that Iran will take steps to regain the confidence of the international community and assume its rightful role as a prosperous, responsible Power constructively engaged in the region. We respect the Iranian people. We have deep respect for Iran's civilization and the achievements of its past, but I urge Iran not to undertake any more actions that would take it further beyond JCPOA limits and instead to work closely and in good faith with other participants to implement its commitments fully and to help reduce the escalating tensions in that region of the world.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank the briefers for their statements and the Secretariat for its thorough and detailed report and for its commitment and professionalism. It may rest assured of our full support.

We are meeting today for the eighth time in this format since the entry into force of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on 16 January 2016. Its adoption was the outcome of the tireless efforts undertaken by the international community to achieve the common goal of ending the serious nuclear-proliferation crisis in the region. The merits of the agreement in terms of non-proliferation have been established and verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which confirmed that up until July 2019, Iran had complied with its nuclear commitments. The E3 and the European Union (EU), for their part, fully complied with their commitments, including the lifting of sanctions set out under the agreement, and went beyond that by making efforts to facilitate legitimate trade between Europe and Iran.

Today's meeting is being held amid alarming uncertainty. Like the Secretary-General, France deplored the decision by the United States to withdraw from the JCPOA and to reinstate national sanctions against Iran. We are deeply concerned by the nuclear measures taken by Iran since July last, which the IAEA has described in its various reports. These recurrent

actions are at variance with the provisions of the JCPOA and indicate a regrettable departure from the agreement on the part of Iran and a serious threat of nuclear proliferation. Iran must immediately return to full compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA and refrain from taking any additional measures at variance with the agreement.

The commitments that have been undertaken do not stop with the JCPOA but extend to cover the whole of resolution 2231 (2015). We are especially troubled by the information highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report vis-à-vis the ongoing non-compliance by Iran with several of the agreement's provisions. I am referring here to various arms transfers to two other actors in the Middle East, which must end. We have taken note of the information in the report regarding the dual attack conducted on 14 September last targeting Saudi oil facilities. It is clear for us that Iran bears responsibility therefor, as we established last September with our British and German partners.

Furthermore, Iran continues to carry out particularly destabilizing missile-related activities. I would mention its efforts to develop a ballistic programme that is at variance with resolution 2231 (2015). Iran is deploying efforts, which France has flagged in the Council on a number of occasions along with its British and German partners, to improve the precision, reach and lethality of those missiles. Beyond the development of a domestic programme, Iran continues to engage in ballistic material and technology transfers to State and non-State actors in the Middle East, which attests to its non-compliance with several Council resolutions; these transfers are particularly destabilizing. It is vital that Iran put an end to such activities and fully abide by the resolutions adopted by the Council.

Given the mounting nuclear and regional tensions in the Middle East, there is a vital need to de-escalate and reach a political settlement through ongoing diplomatic efforts and a commitment by all parties. France, alongside its partners, stands ready to engage to create the necessary conditions, promote the achievement of a political settlement and foster a de-escalation of tensions. Our commitment to the JCPOA remains intact, as does our determination to pursue our efforts on the basis of a broad and long-term approach to its preservation. As the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy underlined on 11 November,

we remain ready to consider all mechanisms of the JCPOA, including the dispute resolution mechanism, to resolve issues related to Iran's compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA.

All stakeholders must do their part to preserve our leeway to act and make progress. It is our collective responsibility, and in the interest of all parties, to work together to preserve the nuclear agreement and reach a diplomatic settlement within the existing framework. France calls on everyone around this table to rally around that objective in the interest of preserving international peace and security, of which the Council is the guarantor.

Mr. Trullols Yabra (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the briefers for their remarks this afternoon and for their commendable work in effectively implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and resolution 2231 (2015).

We welcome the eighth report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/934) and the latest report issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). In that regard, we wish to highlight the verification and monitoring undertaken by the IAEA to ensure the implementation of the JCPOA and the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes.

The Dominican Republic strongly supports the JCPOA and its full implementation, as it is a successful product of diplomacy, multilateralism and the non-proliferation architecture. It is therefore imperative to continue to undertake comprehensive efforts to preserve it and not to toss aside the years of hard work that led to its adoption. In that regard, we welcome the good offices of the stakeholders, as well as the cooperation of other States in upholding the agreement, as is the case of the European Union, which has implemented various measures such as the establishment of the financial institution Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges to promote legitimate commercial activities to ease the economic restrictions of the unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran. In that regard, we regret the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement, the reimposition of sanctions and the recent cancellation of exemptions on nuclear non-proliferation projects under the plan and commercial oil activities.

At the same time, we note with concern that as a result of the reimposition of sanctions in July, Iran has begun to reduce its commitments agreed to in

the agreement, including by exceeding the limit of 3.67 per cent of enriched uranium. We therefore urge Iran to avoid taking further steps that would violate the agreement, the nuclear architecture and the trust placed in it by the parties. We call on Iran to return to full compliance with the provisions of the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015), as the most viable way to ensure that its nuclear programme is peaceful and solely for the well-being of the Iranian people.

Together, we encourage Iran to address the concerns raised by various States, including several parties to the plan, regarding activities that do not keep with the restrictive measures set forth in paragraph 3 of annex B of resolution 2231 (2015), which calls on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to deliver nuclear weapons. Moreover, we call on Iran to avoid destabilizing activities, such as alleged transfers of weapons and related technologies to armed groups and States in conflict, which are also inconsistent with the aforementioned resolution.

In conclusion, we wish to underscore that the Secretary-General's report indicates that Iran continues to comply with the Additional Protocol to its IAEA Safeguards Agreement, as well as transparency measures, which we commend. For that reason and taking into account that the Iranian authorities have stated that the recent reduction of the country's commitments is a reversible step, we understand that the JCPOA can be preserved. To achieve that, however, the parties must narrow their differences through dialogue that facilitates the easing of tensions and the achievement of a solution that guarantees that Iran will not increase its nuclear capacity or pose a threat to international peace and security, especially in the Middle East, while it is safely reintegrated into the commercial and banking world and receives the previously agreed on economic benefits.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Ambassador Peesteen de Buytswerve and Ambassador Skoog for their briefings and commend the parties concerned for their efforts.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), endorsed by the Security Council, is a significant achievement of multilateral diplomacy and an essential component of international order based on international law. It is of crucial importance for safeguarding the

international nuclear non-proliferation regime and maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East.

The Iranian nuclear issue is reaching a critical turning point, and the implementation of the JCPOA is being put to a severe test. Dialogue and negotiation point to a realistic avenue to settle the Iranian nuclear issue. The full and effective implementation of the JCPOA is the only correct and effective way to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue and ease the current situation. All the parties concerned should work together to restore the balance of rights and obligations under the plan.

China is concerned about the United States unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and its increase of unilateral sanctions against Iran. In the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/934), he also states his belief that such steps on the part of the United States continue to run contrary to the goals set out in the JCPOA and the resolution and may also impede Iran's ability to implement certain provisions of the plan or the resolution. The Secretary-General's observation warrants serious attention on the part of the Council and all the parties.

China has noted that Iran has remained largely restrained in reducing its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, and that it has stressed that all the steps that it has taken in that regard are reversible and subject to the monitoring and verification of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). All the parties to the agreement should exercise restraint and stay within the framework of the Joint Commission to strengthen consultations, resolve their differences and refrain from taking steps that might further complicate the situation.

China commends all the parties to the agreement for their courage and efforts. We appreciate Russia's continued efforts to take forward the modification of the Fordow nuclear facility. We welcome the European Union's positive progress in setting up the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, and we support France in its continued diplomatic good offices. We further support the IAEA in its continued objective and impartial position in monitoring and verifying Iran's nuclear activities.

China has always been committed to settling the Iranian nuclear issue through political and diplomatic channels and remains committed to consolidating the international nuclear non-proliferation system and safeguarding international regional peace and stability.

China is a negotiator of and participant in the JCPOA, as well as its staunch defender and enforcer. China will continue to work with all the parties to make new progress in the modernization of the Arak heavy-water reactor. We will continue to be objective, impartial and responsible in our tireless efforts to uphold and implement the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015).

China commends the Secretary-General's report for its call to uphold the agreement, protect the freedom to pursue legitimate business with Iran, support the procurement channel and maintain regional stability. In the meantime, the report should reflect the implementation of the resolution in an objective, balanced and comprehensive manner so as to ensure the accuracy of the information and fully address Iran's legitimate concerns and lawful rights and interests.

The 2231 format of the Council is not a sanctions mechanism. The Facilitator of the format and the Secretariat should act strictly in accordance with their mandate and function. In the current circumstances, all the parties need to exercise caution in addressing Iran's missile launches and accurately interpret the relevant Council resolution in order to avoid any negative impact on the overall picture of the implementation of the JCPOA. China notes Iran's repeated statements on the conventional and self-defensive nature of its missile programme and hopes that the parties will take the Iranian position seriously.

The proper handling of the Iranian nuclear issue is closely linked to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East. Recently, the Middle East has seen continued tensions and rapidly evolving hotspot issues. China calls on all the parties concerned to remain calm, exercise restraint, resolve disputes through dialogue and consultation, refrain from taking actions that might escalate regional tensions, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of others. China supports the Gulf countries in conducting dialogue on regional security issues and supports the countries of the region in their efforts to resolve conflicts.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): First of all, we would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing and to welcome once again our old friend Ambassador Olof Skoog, who is now wearing a different hat. We of course also thank Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve of Belgium for his briefing on

the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). I would like to highlight several points.

First, Indonesia continues to support the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and of resolution 2231 (2015) as a whole. We continue to regret the United States withdrawal from the JCPOA and its further reimposition of unilateral sanctions. While we understand the difficulties in the implementation of the JCPOA in the context of the United States sanctions, we are also concerned by Iran's moves to reduce its JCPOA commitments. Indonesia strongly calls on all parties to remain committed to the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA and of resolution 2231 (2015), in good faith.

We commend the independence, professionalism and impartiality of the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in verifying and monitoring Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. We call on Iran to continue to cooperate with the IAEA. Furthermore, the deal is not only about non-proliferation, but also about the economic interests of Iran. In that regard, we continue to support legitimate trade activities with Iran and welcome the decisions of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden to join the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, as elaborated earlier by Ambassador Skoog.

Secondly, we continue to note with concern the differences in the interpretation and implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). Annex B of resolution 2231 (2015) is designed to improve transparency and create an atmosphere conducive to the full implementation of the JCPOA. It is therefore pertinent to implement that resolution as a whole, together with the JCPOA. We urge the parties to engage in a constructive dialogue to solve those differences. In the same spirit, in order to create an atmosphere conducive to implementation and ensure stability in the region, we call upon Iran to take into consideration the lawful concerns of other States when carrying out its activities.

Thirdly, as a proponent of a balanced implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Indonesia continues to believe that the JCPOA is an essential element of the global non-proliferation architecture. The JCPOA was a significant diplomatic achievement endorsed by the Security Council through resolution 2231 (2015).

Now the international community must live up to its obligation to fully support it.

We must also not forget our commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. As a party to the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and as a main proponent of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Indonesia calls on all to support global nuclear disarmament. To that end, we fully support the process towards the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the first conference of which has just concluded its first session. That takes us one step closer to a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In closing, we call on everyone to demonstrate their full commitment to peace, stability and the rule of law. Only when we achieve those ends can we have a safe and prosperous world for all.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and the Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) for their briefings. I would also like to extend a particularly warm welcome to Ambassador Olof Skoog in his new role as Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and thank him for his briefing. We also thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat team for delivering yet another thorough, well-evidenced and balanced report (S/2019/934).

The turn of events since we last discussed the implementation of resolution 2231 in June (see S/PV.8564) is very worrying. Nevertheless, our assessment remains the same. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is firmly based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and strengthens the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. The JCPOA is an important asset for security in the region and beyond. Preserving the JCPOA is therefore in our shared European security interests and, as we see it, in the interests of all.

We welcome and reiterate the Secretary-General's call for the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA by all participants. We have upheld our commitments under the JCPOA and will continue to do so. We also wish to recall that paragraph 2 of resolution 2231 (2015) calls on all States Members of the United

Nations to refrain "from actions that undermine implementation of commitments under the JCPOA".

We are deeply concerned about Iran's lack of compliance with the JCPOA. The deliberate steps Iran has taken since July violate core provisions and increasingly undermine the value of the JCPOA for nuclear non-proliferation. We urge Iran to reverse those measures and return to full compliance without delay. Let me note here that the issue of Iran's compliance is a matter of concern to all remaining JCPOA participants. That issue is being addressed intensively within the formats of the JCPOA, in particular at the latest meeting of the Joint Commission on 6 December, as well as during the ministerial meeting of the JCPOA participants that was held on the margins of the high-level week at the General Assembly. We will continue to work hard to find a viable solution within the framework of the JCPOA to this compliance issue. Together with our E3 partners, we are ready to use, in good faith, all available instruments provided by the JCPOA. Our goal is and remains to preserve the JCPOA.

Turning to annex B of resolution 2231 (2015), the full and effective implementation of annex B is highly important for regional and international stability. Again, the findings of the Secretary-General with regard to Iran's ballistic missile activities and arms transfers give rise to serious concerns. Iran is continuing to advance the scope and precision of its ballistic missile arsenal, as we have outlined in a number of E3 letters to the Secretary-General, most recently on 21 November. Tests and launches of ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons are inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B. In our view, that includes space-launch vehicles using such missile technology.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about the continued indications of illicit arms transfer activities by Iran, in particular with regard to missiles and missile technology, as we highlighted in the joint E3 letter of 21 November. It is extremely troubling that the recipients of missile technology transfers seem to be armed non-State actors. Such proliferation is highly destabilizing and could aggravate the conflict dynamics in the region in a serious way. Iran must cease those transfer activities at once.

The Secretary-General's report also points to possible violations of the travel ban and assets freeze provisions of the resolution. Those need to be investigated. We strongly call on Iran to comply with

all provisions of resolution 2231 (2015), including annex B, and we encourage all States to continue taking appropriate steps to ensure effective respect for and compliance with the provisions contained in annex B.

As other representatives referred to this earlier, let me say that we fully stand behind the scope and methodology of the report. Resolution 2231 (2015) mandates the Secretary-General to examine and report on the implementation of the entire resolution, including all its annexes. Therefore, we fully support the 2231 (2015) team of the Secretariat looking into cases of the possible illicit transfer of missiles, missile technology and conventional weapons.

With regard to the Aramco attacks, we welcome the fact that United Nations experts are involved in the ongoing investigations. We look forward to further reporting to the Council, and I recall and reaffirm the assessment announced on 23 September by the E3 Heads of State and Government.

Before concluding, let me stress that we all need to contribute to the easing of tensions in the region. The dynamics of the past six months are dangerous and need to be redirected towards de-escalation, restraint and dialogue. We strongly support such efforts, which are crucial to ensuring security and stability in the region.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buyswerwe (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I will now speak in my national capacity.

Belgium aligns itself with its European partners in resolutely defending the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. It is one of the great successes of nuclear non-proliferation, dialogue and diplomacy. Since its entry into force, it has made it possible to guarantee the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. Moreover, the action plan is more than a nuclear agreement. It is a confidence-building tool and the result of 12 years of intensive diplomatic efforts, based on dialogue and respect for the parties.

Like the Secretary-General and the majority of the members of the Security Council, Belgium therefore regrets the withdrawal of the United States from the action plan. Belgium also regrets the reimposition of unilateral sanctions by the United States, their repercussions and the recent lifting of related nuclear exemptions. Those measures prevent not only Iran, but other United Nations Member States as well, from implementing their commitments under resolution 2231 (2015), adopted unanimously by the members of

the Council and supported by a large majority of the international community.

Together with Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden, Belgium has just announced its accession to the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, as my country attaches the utmost importance to the preservation and full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by all parties concerned.

At the same time, Belgium regrets Iran's increasing failure to honour its commitments under the action plan. Like our European partners, we reject any less-for-less approach and call on Iran to return to full compliance with the action plan as soon as possible. We also call on Iran to comply with resolution 2231 (2015) in its entirety, including the restrictive measures in annex B. In that regard, I commend the professional and impartial work of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We have every confidence in the Agency's work and call on all parties to cooperate with it in full transparency in verifying compliance with obligations under the action plan.

We share our European partners' concerns about Iranian ballistic activities and arms transfers in the region, particularly following the seizure of equipment in Aden in December 2018. We call on Iran to refrain from such activities, which are incompatible with resolution 2231 (2015). They deepen mistrust and contribute only to exacerbating tensions in the region. Regional concerns must be addressed through proactive dialogue and negotiations with all actors in the region. Furthermore, all relevant Security Council resolutions must be respected.

Belgium calls on stakeholders to exercise restraint. Continuing to dismantle this successful nuclear agreement, which is working, will not put us in a better position to discuss regional issues or immediately resolve the threats that it is already addressing. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we believe that it would be wise, on the contrary, to support it. The action plan is based on the three main pillars of nuclear disarmament to which the international community subscribes, namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Mr. Van Shalkwyk (South Africa): Allow me to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo,

Ambassador Pecsteen de Buytswerve and Ambassador Skoog for their insightful briefings.

My delegation joins others in welcoming the eighth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2019/934). I wish to reaffirm South Africa's commitment to the full implementation of the resolution.

South Africa welcomes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as an important and, indeed timely and relevant, non-proliferation instrument, which came out of intense diplomatic efforts and complex negotiations among China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2015. My delegation therefore fully supports the Secretary-General's view that such diplomatic efforts must be preserved and be built upon.

South Africa notes the four steps undertaken by Iran to partially cease the implementation of some of its commitments under the JCPOA, which came understandably 14 months after the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA. Notwithstanding the merits of such undertakings by Iran, South Africa wishes underscore that it remains of the utmost importance for Iran to continue to comply with the provisions of the JCPOA. Likewise, it is also critical for all the remaining parties to the JCPOA to fully implement and abide by its provisions.

South Africa continues to regret the decision of the United States to withdraw from the JCPOA, and we share the disappointment expressed by the Secretary-General in his report regarding the United States decision not to renew waivers for nuclear non-proliferation projects in the framework of the JCPOA. It is our view that the decision of the United States will inadvertently affect the ability of Iran to fully implement the provisions of the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015). It would be important to recall that the lifting of sanctions, especially on certain nuclear-related materials, was part and parcel of the JCPOA.

While we commend the benefits of the JCPOA as an essential instrument of nuclear non-proliferation, we wish to stress that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee that those weapons will never be used again by anyone under any circumstances. South Africa wishes to remind the Council that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. A lack of progress on nuclear

disarmament will inadvertently affect the gains made in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. South Africa also wishes to underline the importance of respecting the inalienable right of States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

South Africa is a staunch supporter of nuclear-weapon-free zones as one of the major contributors to nuclear non-proliferation and critical building blocks towards achieving the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. In that regard, my delegation wishes to highlight the urgent need for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and, accordingly, we take note of the political declaration agreed at the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held from 18 to 22 November.

Finally, with regard to the broader security of the region, South Africa joins others in expressing its concern about the growing tensions in the Persian Gulf and their impact on international peace and security. South Africa urges all parties involved to exercise the utmost restraint and not allow the situation to get out of hand. The Council must support initiatives aimed at the restoration of peace and stability, not only in the Persian Gulf but also in the broader Middle East region.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this briefing on the eighth report (S/2019/934) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). We also wish to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her detailed briefing; Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium, in his capacity as Facilitator, for the excellent work he has carried on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015); and Ambassador Olaf Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, for his coordination of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

My delegation takes note of the findings of the eighth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and calls on Member States, as well as all stakeholders, to comply with the recommendations related to the nuclear issue, including arms transfers, travel bans, assets freezes and ballistic missiles. Concerning the illicit transfer and the

discovery of remnants of arms that may have fuelled conflicts in the Middle East, Côte d'Ivoire is in favour of the establishment of a consensual investigation mechanism in order to shed light on all aspects of those allegations.

Turning specifically to the issue of ballistic missiles, my country calls on all stakeholders to reach an agreement on the interpretation of the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015) in accordance with the letter and spirit of paragraph 3 of annex B. We remain convinced that many points of contention could be resolved through the Joint Commission established by the JCPOA in its annex IV. My delegation also calls for capacity-building for Member States to enable them to better master the procurement channel procedures for the efficient implementation of resolution 2231 (2015).

Furthermore, with regard to the situation in the Persian Gulf and in the Strait of Hormuz in particular, my country calls on the parties to exercise restraint. We urge all those concerned to refrain from any action likely to rekindle regional tensions and threaten navigation in that vital strait for trade.

We note with concern that, despite efforts by the international community to limit the quantity of nuclear weapons across the globe, the non-proliferation architecture — one of the pillars of our collective security — continues to be undermined. We would therefore like to reiterate the urgent need for all States to spare no effort to safeguard international peace and security, which constitutes the very foundation of many multilateral frameworks, notably the United Nations and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the JCPOA.

Although we are concerned by the latest developments regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's uranium enrichment rates, Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that the Iranian nuclear issue can be resolved only within the framework of the JCPOA. We would therefore like to reaffirm our full support for the agreement and call for the further implementation of that text, which was arrived at following long and intense negotiations. My country welcomes the cooperation by the Iranian authorities in that regard, as demonstrated by the excellent verification work carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency on the ground following the conclusion of the JCPOA. In its regular reports, the Agency highlights the non-diversion of declared nuclear material and the absence of undeclared

nuclear material and activities. It also affirms that Iran continues to apply, on a provisional basis, the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement it entered into as part of its ratification of the NPT.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire calls for the unity of the Council on the Iranian nuclear issue with a view to maintaining opportunities for its swift and final resolution. We call upon all parties to maintain their level of commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in order to build confidence and step up cooperation to that end, while honouring all of their obligations under resolution 2231 (2015). My country reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict and to dialogue as the most effective and lasting means to settle disputes, no matter how complex.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank today's briefers for their respective informative presentations.

Poland supports the procurement channel and the Procurement Working Group, as well as the coordinating role of the European Union. We believe that that transparency, non-proliferation and confidence-building measure ensures the conformity of relevant transfers with resolution 2231 (2015) and contributes to supporting the non-proliferation regime. We note, however, the decrease in the number of proposals put forward in the latest reporting period.

Poland welcomes the latest report (S/2019/934) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). We consider it a well-balanced document. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which constitutes an integral part of the resolution, is an important achievement of multilateral diplomacy — a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. However, the JCPOA is at a crossroads, as has been rightly pointed out by the Facilitator, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve. We regret that the future of the agreement has been called into question as a result of the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and actions taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran since May 2018.

We join other European Union partners in expressing our concern over steps taken by Iran to reduce its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, as reported by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Those actions by the crucial stakeholder of the JCPOA might not only endanger its further implementation, but may also make it difficult for the international community to defend the JCPOA in its current form.

Poland echoes the Secretary-General's call on Iran to reverse those measures and refrain from taking further steps to reduce its agreed commitments. We welcome the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to strictly monitor and verify Iran's commitments in order to guarantee the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme in line with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the JCPOA. Poland has full confidence in the Agency's professionalism and impartiality.

We call on Iran to uphold its commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to never seek to develop or acquire any nuclear weapons. We also call on Iran to continue to apply the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement and to formally ratify that Protocol in the near future.

Poland is deeply concerned with the findings of the Secretary-General's report concerning Iran's engagement in ballistic missile tests and launches, its continued illicit transfers of arms, missiles and missile technology to actors in the region and its on-compliance with travel-ban provisions — actions that are inconsistent with annex B to resolution 2231 (2015). Dangerous trends associated with the proliferation of missile-related goods and technologies in the Middle East contribute to regional instability. We encourage Iran to cooperate closely and constructively with the international community in efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Ambassador Olof Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Ambassador of Belgium and Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), for the comprehensive and detailed briefings they just delivered. We also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea thanks the Secretary-General for his eighth comprehensive and balanced report (S/2019/934) on recent developments in the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). These updates are important and certainly clarify key aspects related to the Iranian nuclear programme.

We agree that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), unanimously endorsed by the Security Council on 20 July 2015, is the faithful result of the firmness of the international community on proliferation issues and requires the full and effective compliance of the signatory parties to achieve its maximum potential.

We continue to commend the rigour, professionalism and integrity of the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as the mandated body for verifying and monitoring the full implementation of the JCPOA. Its support for the full implementation of the plan, providing the international community with its assessments and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in line with resolution 2231 (2015), is an unequivocal confirmation of its work.

Equatorial Guinea has always considered the JCPOA as the best option for resolving Iran's nuclear problem and therefore a sustainable way to reduce some of the tensions in the Middle East. It is obviously in our interest to express our concerns about the deterioration that began 8 May 2018 in relation to this issue. We call on all the parties concerned to review their positions and to find some readjustment that will restore the achievements of dialogue and multilateral diplomacy in the proliferation regime that was established in 2015.

We are concerned by the IAEA's assertion in this latest report on the activities announced and undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Iran to reduce its commitments under the plan. It is important that it conclude and confirm the ongoing verifications of the non-diversion of declared nuclear materials and assessments with respect to the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities. It is relevant and necessary that Iran pursue its implementation of the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement and the implementation of the transparency measures undertaken in the plan.

We agree with the stressed importance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and resolution 2231 (2015), which we see as effective and essential tools for nuclear non-proliferation and for stability in the Middle East and the world at large. It is therefore the responsibility of all parties to ensure strict compliance with the commitments undertaken with respect to these legal instruments and the restrictive measures contained in annex B of the resolution.

Before concluding, we reiterate our confidence in diplomatic efforts to find a sustainable solution to this long-standing conflict, the consequences of which threaten Iran's economic stability and adversely affect the well-being of its nation.

Mr. Ugarelli (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the valuable information provided by Assistant Secretary-General Rosemary Di Carlo. We also thank Ambassadors Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, as Facilitator of the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), and Olof Skoog, representing the European Union, for their briefings.

In line with its foreign policy objectives regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Peru attaches high priority to compliance with resolution 2231 (2015), whereby the Council endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We believe that that instrument, and the follow-up and monitoring regime it provides for, reflect the values of multilateralism and diplomacy in peacefully resolving acute international disputes or situations of high tension. The JCPOA should therefore be preserved. We are following the implementation of the plan with particular attention, both in the Security Council and in the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). With regard to the latter, we take note of the comprehensive report submitted by its Director General.

Peru, like other Members of the United Nations, regrets the withdrawal of the United States from the plan, the reimposition of national sanctions and the application of various actions that hinder the capacity of the parties to implement it in its entirety. We also deplore the measures that Iran has taken in response since the middle of this year, aimed at reducing its commitments under the JCPOA. We urge the Iranian authorities to reverse these measures, to exercise restraint and moderation, and to prioritize diplomatic channels.

To this end, we must stress the crucial supporting role that IAEA plays in the implementation of the plan. We particularly highlight its rigorous and impartial work, and the value of its comprehensive reports on its verification and monitoring activities in Iran. We also consider it vital that the Council remain united in its responsibility to ensure the full validity and implementation of the JCPOA and resolution 2231

(2015), so as to preserve the non-proliferation regime and maintain international peace and security.

Finally, given the delicate situation in the Persian Gulf, we join calls on the leaders of the main stakeholders involved to show concrete signs of moderation, commitment to peace and respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States.

I am very grateful to today's briefers.

The eighth report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/934) on resolution 2231 (2015) describes an abundance of Iranian activity carried out in flagrant disregard of Council resolutions. We appreciate the Secretary-General's detailed report on the 14 September attacks on Saudi Aramco oil facilities. As we have said numerous times, Iran is responsible for those attacks. The United Kingdom, France and Germany have joined us in that assessment. There is simply no other plausible explanation. Only Iran could have carried out an attack of this complexity and scope. The weapons used in the attack did not have the range to come from Houthi territory. The unarmed aerial vehicles (UAVs) had numerous characteristics in common with Iranian designs, and the damage at the oil facilities shows that the attack came from the north, not from the south, as one would expect if the Houthis were responsible.

The Council should pause and consider what that means. The Islamic Republic of Iran attacked a sovereign nation from its own territory. That provocative act must be condemned by all nations, regardless of their stance on the nuclear deal. The Council must hold Iran accountable. The Secretary-General's report also confirms that Iran continues to destabilize the region, prolong violence in Yemen and support the expansion of terrorist groups and proxies. For instance, the Secretary-General highlights Iranian transfers of advanced missile technology to Hizbullah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. Further, Iran continues to saturate the Middle East with arms, in violation of resolution 2231 (2015). Among numerous examples are rocket-propelled grenade-launchers shipped to Aden, cruise missiles passed to the Houthis and drones and explosives provided to Syria by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

In late November, the United States interdicted a vessel carrying arms off the coast of Yemen. That follows

the pattern of Iranian shipments to the Houthis. In this shipment was a large amount of advanced weapons, including sophisticated components of anti-ship cruise missiles, land attack cruise missiles, air defence missiles, UAV components and anti-tank missiles. Our investigation into those weapons is ongoing. We expect to provide additional details in the near future. We have also given United Nations arms experts access to that material.

Imagine what the Houthis might have done with those Iranian weapons. With a cruise missile, they could once again attack a civilian airport as they did and Abha, Saudi Arabia, last year. With an Iranian anti-ship missile, the Houthis could take aim at the world's shipping as they did when they hit a Turkish ship carrying wheat in 2018. When Iran supplies weapons to its proxies, the threats are not abstract — just one of those missiles could spark a regional confrontation none of us wants.

Iran also continues to defy the Security Council's call in resolution 2231 (2015) to refrain from activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the Commander of the Al-Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Major General Soleimani, travels freely around the region to help Iran's proxies plan attacks and crush peaceful protests. We remind all Member States that they are obligated to prevent Soleimani's entry into, or transit through, their territories, pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015).

Regarding the assets freeze, Iranian Revolutionary Guard firms on the resolution 2231 (2015) sanctions list continue to work in third countries, in violation of the resolution. That shows the importance of updating the resolution's list of sanctions individuals and entities with accurate information. Such updates will help Member States ensure full compliance with the assets freeze.

Iran's provocations are relentless, and their attempted explanations for each of the ones I have just discussed strain credibility. In that way, Iran repeatedly demonstrates its contempt for the Security Council. As noted in the report, following Iran's announcement that it would begin uranium-enrichment activities at the Fordow facility, the United States announced the termination of the sanctions waiver regarding the centrifuge cascade modification project, effective 15 December 2019. The United States rejects Iran's use of nuclear brinksmanship to normalize is destabilizing

behaviour. Iran originally constructed Fordow as a fortified underground bunker to secretly enrich uranium. There is no legitimate reason for Iran to resume enrichment at that site. Iran must immediately cease its enrichment activity there.

The United States is willing to engage in dialogue with Iran to negotiate a deal that will better serve international peace and security, but we will not sit idly by while Iran continues to destabilize the region. We will do everything in our power to curb malign Iranian behaviour, and we urge our partners on the Council to do the same.

I also want to raise an issue of grave concern to the United States. Iran's response to recent protests across the country has been brutal. The United States strongly condemns Iran's response, and we stand in solidarity with the Iranian people. Although we still do not have a full picture of the regime's repression and human rights abuses during those protests, we are deeply troubled by what we do know. Videos from the scene show that 40 to 100 protesters were massacred by Iranian Revolutionary Guard forces in Mahshahr. It is likely that the regime's crackdown has been even more brutal than reports to date indicate.

The United States welcomes recent statements of concern by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, but more must be done. We urge the United Nations to focus on this matter, and we stress that the relevant United Nations entities and Special Rapporteurs should conduct a thorough investigation into the Iranian Government's response to the protests.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Security Council is once again considering the implementation of one of its most important resolutions, namely, resolution 2231 (2015), which is being vehemently violated by a permanent member of the Council — an unprecedented development in the history of the United Nations. In that regard, I wish to express my appreciation to the other 14 members of the Council for lending their valuable support to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

When the Council, through its unanimous adoption of resolution 2231 (2015), endorsed the JCPOA, the

whole world acclaimed a significant achievement of dialogue and multilateral diplomacy and acknowledged its indispensable contribution to international peace and security. The resolution emphasizes that

“the JCPOA is conducive to promoting and facilitating the development of normal economic and trade contacts and cooperation with Iran” (*resolution 2231 (2015), thirteenth preambular paragraph*).

As the Secretary-General rightly notes in his recent report,

“An essential part of the Plan is the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran, allowing for the normalization of trade and economic relations.” (*S/2019/934, para.1*)

Furthermore, based on the JCPOA, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States committed to ensuring Iran’s access in the areas of trade, technology, finance and energy, and the United States committed to preventing interference with Iran’s realization of the full benefits of the lifting of sanctions.

On 8 May 2018, the President of the United States issued a presidential memorandum entitled, in part, “Ceasing United States Participation in the JCPOA”. In fact, the United States decided to illegally withdraw from the JCPOA and, in contravention of its international obligations, re-imposed all of its sanctions, which had been lifted in accordance with the JCPOA. That and subsequent developments rendered the JCPOA with respect to Iran’s benefits almost fully ineffective. In certain respects, the situation now is even worse than before the JCPOA was concluded. Since then, the application of the United States unlawful sanctions has been extended to other States and, in essence, the United States is punishing them for honouring their international commitments in accordance with resolution 2231 (2015) — another unprecedented development in the history of the United Nations.

What the United States sanctions are intended to achieve amounts to collective punishment of the general public, which is prohibited even in armed conflicts. They are also targeting the most vulnerable groups of ordinary people in order to create discontent within society — as such, that is inhumane in nature.

The United States sanctions are also targeting different sectors of the Iranian economy, including the oil and banking sectors, which is negatively affecting

the daily lives of millions of Iranians. Contrary to the claims of United States, its sanctions are neither short of war or better than or an alternative to war; they are actual war but by another means and name, pure and simple. The United States, by weaponizing food and medicine and with total disregard to the ruling of the International Court of Justice of 3 October 2018, has even extended its sanctions to other humanitarian goods.

Officials of the United States have confirmed that the pain of sanctions for ordinary people is intentional and part of a political strategy. The United States Secretary of State has gone on record at least twice with his conditions for allowing food and medicine to flow to the Iranian people.

By any measure, the United States sanctions are illegitimate, immoral, inhumane and cruel. It is a shame that the United States bullying has resulted in the discontinuation of exports of certain medicines to Iran, causing a nightmare for some patients. For instance, a European company, under the pressure of United States sanctions, has stopped exporting special bandages for patients suffering from epidermolysis bullosa, a rare genetic condition resulting in easy blistering of the skin. A 2-year-old girl from the city of Ahvaz, Ava, an epidermolysis bullosa patient, is one of the “butterfly children” — so called because their skin is as fragile as a butterfly’s. To avoid infection, butterfly children should be covered by special bandages. Not even those bandages stop the pain. However, the alternative is horrible, as it peels kids’ soft skin at the time of removal. Nowadays, the importation of those special bandages for epidermolysis bullosa has become almost impossible, endangering the lives of innocent children like Ava. Now butterfly children are feeling the pain of the inhumane United States sanctions with their hearts and souls. Ava was relieved of pain forever when she passed away in June. Her story reflects only the tip of the iceberg, as children and adults with cancer and rare diseases are struggling in silence with death. Killing children and patients takes no courage.

The United States maximum pressure policy and sanctions are tantamount to economic terrorism and are killing innocent people. Those who have been involved in designing, advocating and executing those sanctions must therefore be held accountable. The Secretary-General is expected, consistent with his mandate under paragraph 7 of presidential note S/2016/44, to thoroughly report on United States sanctions and their inhumane impact.

The United States has further illegally sanctioned nuclear measures authorized under resolution 2231 (2015), thereby preventing Iran and other States from implementing their commitments. Moreover, activities of the procurement channel have been negatively affected. Despite all the hardships inflicted on the Iranian people as a result of the United States unlawful sanctions, Iran, at the request of other JCPOA participants and based on their assurances of compensation, waited for a year and continued to fully implement its commitments. On 6 July and 24 September 2018, Iran was assured by JCPOA participants of compensation, especially in establishing effective financial channels, the export of oil, shipping and insurance, and protection from the extraterritorial effects of United States sanctions. None of those assurances have materialized to date.

Iran has been, and continues to be, committed to the implementation of the JCPOA. That fact has been confirmed time and again by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including after the reintroduction of unilateral sanctions by the United States. However, the unilateral implementation of the JCPOA is not sustainable. The deal needs more than one willing and able party to be fully implemented. After exercising strategic patience for a year, in the face of apparent continued inaction by the European participants in the JCPOA, and after witnessing that the promises made to Iran were not honoured, Iran was left with no other option than to act and take the necessary measures to rectify the imbalance created in the JCPOA. In doing so Iran, which had already triggered and exhausted the JCPOA dispute-settlement mechanism, eventually applied the remedy manifestly recognized by the JCPOA and the Security Council. That decision was carefully crafted to save the JCPOA.

Iran has ceased performing its commitments in part in accordance with paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA. To give room for diplomacy, a step-by-step approach with two-month intervals has been designed. Iran's steps are reversible, but the damages inflicted upon Iran and the Iranian people due to illegal sanctions are not reversible at all. How can the opportunities that have been lost, the economy that is affected and, above all, the precious lives that have perished, as well as the suffering of the Iranian people, especially children, the elderly and patients, be reversed?

Iran has ceased implementing only some voluntary measures. They have not affected Iran's cooperation with the IAEA. They are also not inconsistent with

our safeguards-related obligations. The Agency has repeatedly confirmed that Iran is subjected to the most robust verification system in existence anywhere in the world. It is noteworthy that in 2018 the number of all IAEA safeguards inspections around the world stood at 2,195, while up to November this year Iran was subjected to more than 688 inspections, amounting to 1,376 person-day of inspections.

Iran has always respected its commitments and responded to logic with logic and respect with respect. However, we cannot and will not accept bullying from any quarter. Our response to threats and intimidation is in kind. At the moment, best efforts in good faith are being made by Iran to sustain the JCPOA. As soon as the full implementation of the JCPOA by other participants is guaranteed, Iran will immediately reverse all its measures. If there is a will for the full implementation of the JCPOA by all concerned, there is a way. However, Iran cannot remain indifferent to the continuation of illegal sanctions and the lack of a compensatory response to those sanctions by other participants. Iran will take the necessary measures to secure its national interests, and our options are not limited. At the same time, any unnecessary and unwarranted measures against Iran will be met with decisive action, as has already been conveyed at the highest level to our JCPOA partners.

The United States offer of unconditional talks with Iran is disingenuous, emanating from its habit to enter dialogue from a position of strength, and it is not based on an equal footing. The call for dialogue with Iran and the simultaneous insisting on the application of a maximum pressure policy against the Iranian people are mutually exclusive. Iran does not negotiate under the threat of a sword. The United States has to make a strategic decision. As an American proverb goes, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. Either the United States rejects diplomacy and continues with its horrible and outdated maximum pressure policy, while scolded by the Iranian people and branded at the international level as an untrustworthy partner, or it can act as a normal country and undo the sanctions. In that context, the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) by the United States will pave the way for a genuine dialogue to start within the framework of the nuclear deal.

Since the conclusion of the JCPOA, a few countries have attempted to expand the involvement of the Security Council to issues beyond Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. In the course of the nuclear

negotiations, we resisted the temptation of some participants to include extraneous matters in the final document, and hence did not agree either to touch Iran's legitimate defensive capabilities or affect its role in the region, including in the fight against terrorism. Recent attempts to link those issues, including through the misinterpretation of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), are completely unjust.

Acquiring legitimate means of defence is an inherent right under international law. We are living in a volatile and insecure region. Furthermore, the sale of a large amount of heavy weaponry to our region has turned it into a powder keg. Those who ask Iran to limit its legitimate conventional capabilities are making lots of money from exports of deadly weaponry to the region. Under no circumstances will Iran compromise on its security.

Iran does not possess nuclear weapons and committed in the JCPOA to never seek, develop or acquire them. Accordingly, Iran's missiles are not designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, and therefore are outside the purview of resolution 2231 (2015). The term "designed to be capable" was deliberately chosen pursuant to cumbersome negotiations in order to exclude Iran's conventional missiles from the scrutiny of the resolution. That notion is well reflected in Iran's statement following the adoption of resolution 2231 (2015) (see S/PV.7488). The arbitrary reinterpretation of the resolution by recourse to non-legally binding definitions of an informal, and yet exclusive, 35-member club like the Missile Technology Control Regime is totally misleading and therefore unacceptable.

In conclusion, our observations with regard to the Secretary-General's report are contained in my recent letter to the Council and cover our views on issues that have not been addressed in my remarks today. I take this opportunity to also make a few comments regarding the observations made by some members on issues irrelevant to this meeting's agenda.

First, on the attack against the Aramco oil facilities, we have repeatedly and categorically

rejected all allegations against us in that regard. As the Council might recall, immediately — I repeat, immediately — after the attack, both the United States and Saudi Arabia claimed that Iran was responsible for the attack. Such claims were fully consistent with their typical practice in similar situations insofar as they first accuse Iran and then pretend that they will conduct a thorough investigation. The predetermined outcome of such an investigation has been, and continues to be, predictable. They consistently result in some forced photos or videos or fabricated documents proving Iran's so-called direct or indirect involvement.

Secondly, today the Council has also been misinformed regarding the ongoing situation in the Middle East. The common denominator of the past and present situation in the Middle East is that the United States, through its divide-and-rule policy, has consistently and continuously fanned and fuelled regional conflicts. In turn, Iran has been and will remain a strong force against insecurity, terrorism and extremism in the region. One living example of that is our assistance to the Governments and the peoples of Iraq and Syria in defeating Da'esh.

Despite all these attempts, nothing can disconnect the strong historic, cultural and religious fraternal bonds among the countries of the region. We have always supported the establishment of a security structure in the Persian Gulf area. The recent initiative of our President, known as the Hormuz Peace Endeavour, is the right plan introduced at the right time. We are prepared to engage with our neighbours to arrive at a mutually agreed plan as soon as possible.

Thirdly, raising Iran's internal matters in this meeting is in gross violation of the very basic principles upon which the Organization is founded. Paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations clearly prohibits the Organization's intervention or interference in the internal affairs of States. We totally reject the allegations raised against my country in that regard.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.