Ambassador Nikki Haley Delivers Remarks at a UN Security Council Meeting on Iran

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Thank you Mr. President. Thank you Under-Secretary Feltman, for your briefing today, and Ambassador Almeida, for your comments.

The topic of Iranian regime’s compliance with its international obligations reminds me of the fable of the scorpion and the frog. The scorpion asks the frog for a ride across the river. The frog quite rationally asks, “How do I know you won’t sting me?” And the scorpion replies, “Because it would kill both of us. We’d both drown.” So the frog is convinced. He lets the scorpion get on his back and starts across the river. But sure enough, midway through, the scorpion stings him. With his last breath the frog asks, “Why?” And the scorpion replies, “Because it’s in my nature.”

The Secretary-General’s report is filled with devastating evidence of the nature of the Iranian regime. In paragraph after paragraph, it documents the Iranian government’s actions in defiance of Resolution 2231: repeated ballistic missile launches, proven arms smuggling, illicit procurement of ballistic missile-related technology. Iran’s destructive and destabilizing role in the Middle East goes far beyond its illicit missile launches. From Syria to Yemen and Iraq to Lebanon, Iran’s support for terrorist groups continues unabated. Iran’s weapons, military advisors and arms smugglers stoke regional conflicts and make them harder to solve.

Iran’s leaders abuse their own people. The Iranian people deserve better. The Iranian people know the horror of chemical weapons attacks. And so it is sad and horrifying, the irony that the Iranian regime now supports a dictator in Syria who uses these same evil weapons against his own people.

But just as alarming as the actions of the scorpion is the gullibility of the frog. It’s been almost two years since this Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2231 – a resolution that this report confirms has been repeatedly and deliberately violated by the Iranian regime. And yet the Security Council has failed to take even minimal steps to respond to these violations.

What’s more, these violations are not occurring in secret. They are being covered in the media, and yet this Council has done nothing. Let me give an example. Resolution 2231 banned Iranian Major General Soleimani from traveling outside of Iran. It gave all UN Member States a clear and unambiguous obligation to deny him entry. Nonetheless, the Secretary-General’s report cites multiple press photos and reports of the general traveling to Syria and Iraq. And this is not the first time he’s openly traveled to other countries. This is a violation of the Security Council’s authority, plain and simple. And it’s one that is occurring out in the open for the entire world to see.

The Secretary General’s report makes clear that Iran is in violation of the Security Council Resolution 2231. And so the question becomes: what is the Security Council going to do about it? What will we do to make Iran understand that Resolution 2231 means something? We as the Security Council must stand behind the provisions of 2231. We must strictly enforce them and show Iran that we will not tolerate their egregious flaunting of UN resolutions. These measures are here for a reason. This Council should be here to enforce them.

For our part, the United States will not continue to turn a blind eye to Iranian regime’s behavior. In our national capacity, the United States will do our part to enforce Resolution 2231. We will work with our global partners to interdict cargo prohibited under the resolution. And we will continue to impose our own sanctions on those who help violate Resolution 2231. Regarding the portions of the resolution that address the nuclear deal, as we have said previously, the United States is now undertaking a comprehensive review of this policy. Until that review is completed, we will comply with our JCPOA commitments, and we expect Iran to do the same.

The continuance of Iran’s destructive, destabilizing behavior will prevent it from ever having a normal relationship with the United States and the rest of the world. And the regime’s continued oppression of its own people speaks volumes about its true nature.

At a military parade last September, the Iranian government first displayed the missile it fired into Syria last week. The new missiles were accompanied by a banner that read: “If the leaders of the Zionist regime make a mistake, then the Islamic Republic will turn Tel Aviv and Haifa to dust.”

These are not the words of a peace-loving regime. These are not the words of a responsible member of the international community. These are the words of a scorpion. The Security Council must recognize this fact and act accordingly.

Thank you.