



Security Council

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Letter dated 21 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The United States would like to share information with the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) on Iran, and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#) on Yemen, regarding two shipments of arms and related materiel from Iran, which were likely bound for Houthi forces in Yemen. This information may be useful to the members of the Security Council, the Facilitator, the Committee, the Panel of Experts on Yemen, and the Secretary-General and his staff in carrying out their mandates with respect to reported violations of Council resolutions [2231 \(2015\)](#) and [2216 \(2015\)](#).

On 25 November 2019, a United States warship conducted a right-of-visit boarding in international waters (seaward of the territorial sea of Yemen and any other State), determined the vessel was stateless and seized a significant cache of unlawful weapons and missile parts, evidently of Iranian origin. The seizure included sophisticated weapons, sophisticated components of anti-ship cruise missiles, land-attack cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles and anti-tank missiles. Specifically, the items seized included:

- Assorted electronics items, including components for unmanned aerial systems (unmanned aerial system components included engines and related parts, as well as servos used to move control surfaces and to regulate the throttle)
- Iranian-manufactured thermal scopes
- Anti-tank guided missiles
- Anti-ship cruise missile components
- Land-attack cruise missile components
- Multiple surface-to-air missile systems
- Approximately 13,000 blasting caps

The unmanned aerial system components are consistent with those that have been identified on numerous unmanned aerial vehicles recovered in Yemen. The scopes seized are manufactured in Iran and include a collection of batteries bearing manufacturing dates in October 2017. The seized anti-tank guided missiles, anti-ship cruise missile components and land-attack cruise missile components are consistent with known Iranian weapons systems. The anti-tank guided missiles contain manufacturing dates in 2017 and 2018, and the surface-to-air missile systems bear



standard Iranian part number markings. This interdiction fits a consistent historical pattern of vessels being used to transfer weapons to the Houthis in Yemen. The information available suggests that the seized arms and related materiel originated in Iran and were bound for Houthi forces in Yemen after the arms restrictions on Iran set forth in resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), annex B, and the arms embargo in resolution [2216 \(2015\)](#) took effect.

Subsequently, on 9 February 2020, a United States warship conducted a right-of-visit boarding in international waters (seaward of the territorial sea of Yemen and any other State), determined the vessel was stateless and seized a significant cache of unlawful weapons and missile parts, evidently of Iranian origin. The weapons seized included 150 anti-tank guided missiles, surface-to-air missiles, thermal scopes for rifles and components for unmanned maritime systems, as well as other munitions and advanced weapons parts. Specifically, the items seized included:

- Iranian-manufactured thermal scopes for rifles
- Control panels, along with radio transmitters and servo motors used to power control surfaces, with waterproof cases and waterproof wiring suggesting that they would be used in explosive boats
- Surface-to-air missiles and other missile components
- Anti-tank guided missiles

The seized thermal scopes are produced by an Iranian manufacturer. The thermal scopes contained an operational manual indicating a manufacture date of 19 April 2017 and were seized in a wooden box bearing a waybill with an origin of Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport and a destination of Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport. The seized surface-to-air missiles bear manufacturing dates in 2019, with components bearing manufacturing dates between 2017 and 2019, and contain elements suggesting an Iranian origin. The markings and components of the anti-tank guided missiles are unique to Iranian systems. Based on this and other information, the United States assesses that this shipment of weapons also originated in Iran and was likely ultimately bound for Houthi forces in Yemen.

Paragraph 6 (b) of annex B of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) prohibits the supply, sale or transfer of arms or related materiel from Iran, absent approval in advance on a case-by-case basis by the Security Council. Based on an analysis of available information, the United States believes that the arms seized on 25 November 2019 and 9 February 2020 originated in Iran and that their transfer from Iran violated paragraph 6 (b) of annex B of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). In addition, the transfer of these arms to forces acting on the behalf of or at the direction of individuals on the United Nations Yemen sanctions list would be a violation of paragraph 14 of resolution [2216 \(2015\)](#).

We trust that this information will assist the Security Council in promoting the implementation of resolutions [2231 \(2015\)](#) and [2216 \(2015\)](#), including the arms embargoes contained therein. In addition, both the United Nations Secretariat experts monitoring the implementation of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the Panel of Experts on Yemen have inspected the items seized in both instances. We therefore respectfully request that the Secretary-General report fully and thoroughly the export or transfer from Iran of arms. We trust that the information in this report will assist in this work. The United States also encourages the Security Council, the 2231 format and the Committee to raise this incident with Iran directly and to review additional ways to improve the implementation of these measures. The United States offers its assistance with any investigation undertaken.

The United States is concerned that the export of weapons from Iran continues to threaten international peace and security in the region. Transfers to Houthi forces in Yemen in violation of the arms embargo established in resolution 2216 (2015) also undermine opportunities to achieve peace in the region and reduce the suffering of the people of Yemen. Accordingly, the United States urges the Security Council to be seized of this matter.

I ask that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council. I also ask that the letter be brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and that it be circulated by the Facilitator to the 2231 format and by the Chair of the Committee to its members.

(Signed) Kelly **Craft**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
