

MEMMO

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Iran's Ballistic Missile Program: Lifting Restrictions in the Face of a Growing Threat

According to the U.S. intelligence community, Iran views ballistic missiles as its preferred delivery method should it acquire nuclear weapons. Yet, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231 will lift binding restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program as soon as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) comes into effect. Under UNSCR 2231, Iran will be freed from all limitations on its ballistic missile program within eight years.

UNSCR 2231 Replaces Mandatory Restrictions with Non-Binding Language

- The prior resolution, UNSCR 1929, placed explicit restrictions on Iran's development and use of ballistic missile systems, stating that it "Decides that Iran shall not undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons."
- UNSCR 2231 replaces binding restrictions with a non-binding recommendation that expires eight years after the deal's implementation. Iran is only "called upon not to undertake" ballistic missile work. And if the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) certifies that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful before the expiration, *all* of the restrictions on its program will lift immediately.

There is No Clear Path to Enforce Ballistic Missile Restrictions

- UNSCR 2231 lacks enforcement mechanisms to monitor Iranian compliance and does not specify penalties for violations of its non-binding recommendation.
- Moreover, the administration has stated that ballistic missile violations are not "nuclear" violations, and therefore are not part of the sanctions "snapback" mechanism.

Iranian Officials Reject Any Limits on Its Ballistic Missile Program

- Following the resolution's adoption, Iran's Foreign Ministry released a statement saying, "Iran's military capacities, especially ballistic missiles...are outside the scope and competence of the Security Council resolution."
- On July 21, 2015, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told the Iranian parliament that per the resolution, the constraints on its ballistic missile program "has turned into a non-binding restriction."

- In August 2015, Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Ali Larijani claimed that the resolution contains clauses on missiles “which we will not listen to, and we do not accept... [Iran will] continue missile work.”
- On August 22, Iran unveiled a new ballistic missile, the Fateh 313, flaunting its ongoing ballistic missile activities in contravention of UNSCR 2231. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani explicitly declared Iran’s intention to continue ignoring international law, stating, "We will buy, sell and develop any weapons we need and we will not ask for permission or abide by any resolution for that."

Sanctions Relief Will Boost Iran’s Ballistic Missiles Program

- Per the JCPOA, after the IAEA confirms Iran’s initial compliance, Iran will immediately receive as much as \$100 billion currently locked up abroad. This relief is expected to significantly boost Iran’s expenditures on developing, testing and fielding its ballistic missile capabilities.
- Per the JCPOA, sanctions on many of the individuals and entities involved in Iran’s ballistic missile program will lift.

Iran Has the Most Robust Ballistic Missile Program in the Middle East

- According to U.S. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, Iran has the largest, most diverse stockpile of ballistic missiles in the Middle East, including short- and medium-range missiles. The scale, reach and sophistication of Iran’s program continues to expand.
- According to a May 2015 Congressional Research Service report “Iran has developed a close working relationship with North Korea on many ballistic missile programs.” Despite UNSCR 2231, many experts believe Iran will continue cooperation with rogue states, including North Korea.
- According to the U.S. intelligence community, Iran has made recent progress towards developing solid-fueled ballistic missile technologies that significantly reduce a missile’s launch preparation time and footprint.
- According to the U.S. intelligence community, Iran is investing significant resources towards improving the guidance and precision strike capabilities of its existing ballistic missiles stockpile.
- According to the U.S. intelligence community, Iran is currently developing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM).

Iran’s ICBM Program Can Eventually Threaten America

- Any ballistic missile can deliver a warhead, but ICBMs give Iran the capability of striking the United States.
- Iran maintains a robust space launch research program that the U.S. intelligence community believes could be masking the development of ICBMs. Between 2009 and 2015, Iran successfully conducted five satellite launches into space using medium-range ballistic missiles.
- According to the 2012 Defense Intelligence Agency congressional report on Iranian military power, “Iran has launched multistage space launch vehicles that could serve as a test bed for developing long-range ballistic missile technologies.”