

The U.N. Resolutions

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- Since 2006, the U.N. Security Council passed six resolutions critical of Iran for its controversial nuclear program. Each resolution was designed to increase pressure on Tehran to suspend its uranium enrichment and ballistic missiles development programs, two of three critical steps in obtaining a nuclear weapons capability.
- U.N. sanctions progressively targeted officials, government branches and businesses linked to Iran's nuclear program and military. The resolutions included travel bans and asset freezes on individuals, front companies, and banks.
- U.N. resolutions also increasingly targeted the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), an elite branch of Iran's military and an alleged driver of the country's nuclear program.
- With each resolution, U.S. and European powers faced mounting difficulty winning international consensus to expand sanctions against Iran, particularly from Russia and China.
- On July 14, 2015, Iran and the world's six major powers reached a final deal to limit Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief. The U.N. Security Council endorsed the agreement in a resolution less than a week later.
- Pending U.N. confirmation of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program, the Security Council would terminate sanctions set out in resolutions adopted between 2006 and 2015.

Overview

International concern over Iran's nuclear intentions escalated in August 2002, after an Iranian dissident group revealed a secret uranium enrichment facility at Natanz and a heavy water facility at Arak. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) launched an investigation into Iran's nuclear program. In November 2003, the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency determined that for the previous 18 years, Iran had secretly developed technologies to produce highly enriched uranium. The IAEA reported that Iran had failed to declare several of its nuclear-related activities as required by the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In October 2003, during the IAEA investigation, Britain, France and Germany negotiated an agreement with Iran known as the Tehran Declaration. The Islamic Republic agreed to voluntarily suspend uranium enrichment during negotiations over its nuclear program, fully cooperate with the IAEA, and implement an additional protocol to build confidence in its peaceful nuclear intentions. A key part of the deal was Iran's agreement to provide details on its secret program over the previous 18 years. But negotiations stalled in February 2005 over Iran's right to uranium enrichment. The United States and the European powers wanted Iran to permanently relinquish uranium enrichment; Iran said it would not stop a process granted to all signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Tehran claimed the demand challenged its sovereign rights.

Tensions that ultimately led to U.N. sanctions began in 2005. After negotiations with Britain, France and Germany broke down, Iran resumed its uranium enrichment program in mid-2005 under newly-elected President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The IAEA Board of Governors voted in February 2006 to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council for non-compliance with the NPT, which Iran had signed in 1968. On July 31, 2006, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1696, the first of what grew into six resolutions demanding that Iran cooperate with the IAEA and stop enriching uranium. Iran indicated a willingness to negotiate, but refused to suspend enrichment.

In 2013, Iranians elected Hassan Rouhani to Iran's presidency. His administration engaged in talks with the world's six major powers – Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States. After some 20 months of negotiations, they reached a landmark agreement on July 14, 2015 that was then endorsed in Security Resolution 2231. Under the deal, Iran agreed to limit its nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief.

U.N.S.C. Resolution 1696

The Security Council passed Resolution 1696 by a 14 to 1 vote on July 31, 2006. The resolution demanded that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities within one month. It did not impose sanctions, but vowed that the Security Council would adopt "appropriate measures" if Iran failed to comply. Russia expressed concern that the resolution could be interpreted as authorization for the eventual use of military force against Iran. The final resolution addressed this issue by specifying that the council was acting under Article 41 of the U.N. Charter, which empowers it to use measures *not* involving the use of armed force to enact its decisions. Qatar voted against the resolution after voicing concern about its potential effects on Middle East stability in the middle of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon.

Iran called the resolution unlawful, destructive and unwarranted. Its U.N. envoy noted that Iran's supreme leader had issued a religious decree in August 2005 against the

development, production, stockpiling or use of nuclear weapons. He said nuclear weapons had no place in Iran's military doctrine. Tehran did not comply with the resolution's deadline.

U.N.S.C. Resolution 1737

Resolution 1737 was unanimously passed on December 23, 2006. It imposed the first U.N. sanctions on Iran for failing to comply with the international community. It directed all U.N. member states to adopt measures to prevent the supply, sale or transfer of materials to Iran that could be used for nuclear or ballistic missile programs. The resolution called on member states to freeze the financial assets of 22 corporations and individuals involved in these programs. Among the individuals designated was General Yahya Rahim Safavi, then the Revolutionary Guards commander, for his alleged involvement in both Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Resolution 1737 also called on members to "exercise vigilance" to prevent individuals involved in Iran's proliferation or missile programs from entering or transiting their territories. Russia was initially reluctant to adopt sanctions, in part because of its estimated \$1 billion contract to complete Iran's first light water reactor for peaceful nuclear energy at Bushehr. In order to win Russian support, the final resolution exempted light water reactor items from its list of "proliferation sensitive" materials.

In response, the Iranian foreign ministry spokesman warned that cooperation with the IAEA would worsen. And Iran's U.N. ambassador accused the Security Council of attempting to force Iran to abandon its rights under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He said the council should instead focus its attention on Israel, which had not rejected the use of nuclear weapons or declared its secret program.

U.N.S.C. Resolution 1747

The Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1747 on March 24, 2007. It prohibited member states from procuring combat equipment or weapons systems from Iran, and called on states to "exercise vigilance and restraint" in supplying such items to Iran. It also called on member states and global financial institutions not to enter new financial commitments with Iran's government – including grants or concessional loans – except for humanitarian and developmental purposes. Resolution 1747 added the names of 18 individuals, companies and banks associated with Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. It also added seven individuals linked to the Revolutionary Guards, including Mohammad Reza Zahedi, the commander of IRGC ground forces; Morteza Safari, the commander of the IRGC navy; and Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the elite IRGC Qods force. Finally, it strengthened the previous resolution's travel ban provision by requiring any member state to notify the Security Council whenever an Iranian official designated for ties to Iran's nuclear or missile program entered or transited its territory.

Russia agreed to support Resolution 1747 after accusing Iran of delinquency in payments for Bushehr. Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki charged that in passing the resolution, the Security Council had taken “unnecessary and unjustifiable action” against a peaceful nuclear program that “presents no threat to international peace and security and falls, therefore, outside the council’s charter-based mandate.”

U.N.S.C. Resolution 1803

The Security Council passed Resolution 1803 on March 3, 2008 by a vote of 14-0-1 after intense debate. A U.S. National Intelligence Estimate issued in December 2007 concluded “with high confidence” that Iran’s nuclear program had been suspended in the fall of 2003. As a result, several council members initially questioned the need for further sanctions against Iran. Libya, South Africa, Indonesia and Vietnam were especially hesitant to pursue new punitive measures, arguing that Iran had begun to cooperate with IAEA inspections. However, U.S. and European officials wanted to tighten existing measures because of Iran’s failure to comply with earlier resolutions.

Resolution 1803 contained several suggested measures for member states, but few mandatory actions. It called on states to “exercise vigilance” when providing export credits, guarantees and insurance to Iranian entities. It also called on states to voluntarily limit their interaction with Iranian banks operating in their territories. The resolution specifically urged states to cut ties with Bank Melli and Bank Saderat, which the United States accused of providing financial services for Iran’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs, in addition to facilitating money transfers to terrorist organizations. Resolution 1803 subjected 13 individuals and 12 companies to travel restrictions and asset freezes. Finally, it authorized inspections of air and sea cargo traveling to or from Iran if “reasonable grounds” suggested the vessel was transporting illicit materials.

Indonesia, the world’s largest Muslim country, abstained from the vote on Resolution 1803. Iran’s Ambassador to the IAEA called the resolution “irresponsible,” and described the agency’s information on its nuclear program as “forged and fabricated.”

U.N.S.C. Resolution 1835

The Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1835 on September 27, 2008. It imposed no new sanctions and merely reaffirmed the four earlier resolutions. Resolution 1835 was issued in response to a September 2008 IAEA report that Iran was resisting the agency’s investigation into its nuclear program. The report also said that Tehran was making progress in developing and operating centrifuges for uranium enrichment. In response to these charges, Resolution 1835 called on Iran to comply “fully and without delay with its obligations” under previous resolutions.

Resolution 1835 was the weakest of the Security Council's six resolutions on Iran. In its final U.N. measure on Iran before leaving office, the Bush Administration was forced to accept a compromise resolution after Russia balked at more sanctions. Washington claimed Resolution 1835 showed the council's mutual resolve in confronting Iran, while Moscow argued it would encourage a political solution to the nuclear impasse. Iran's chief nuclear negotiator described the resolution as "not constructive" and said it would only cause further mistrust.

U.N.S.C. Resolution 1929

Resolution 1929 passed on June 9, 2010 by a 12-2-1 vote, after months of intense and sometimes bitter diplomacy. Negotiations over the resolution followed two key events: First, revelations in September 2009 that Iran had built a secret uranium enrichment facility at Qom. And second, Tehran's rejection in October 2009 of a deal designed both to meet Iran's pressing medical needs and serve as a confidence-building measure to allow time for negotiations over the long-term nuclear controversy. The plan called for Iran to send uranium enriched at a low-level to Russia for further enrichment and then to France to be turned into nuclear fuel rods. Iran would receive the finished rods, which would be extremely difficult to use in a nuclear weapon, but would fulfill its energy and research needs. After Iran rejected the offer, U.S. and European officials pushed for new sanctions. Russia and China initially balked, but ultimately agreed to support a new resolution – the first under President Barack Obama. In last-ditch diplomacy, Turkey and Brazil won Iran's approval for a modified "fuel swap" arrangement, but key nations said the deal fell short because it did not account for the near doubling of Iran's enriched uranium since October 2009. Turkey and Brazil opposed the resolution, and Lebanon abstained.

Resolution 1929 required U.N. member states to prevent the transfer of missile-related technology to Iran. It prohibited Iran from acquiring commercial interest in uranium mining or producing nuclear materials in other countries. It enhanced previous travel sanctions by requiring states to prevent designated individuals from entering their territories, and calls on states to inspect ships bound to or from Iran if they suspect banned cargo is aboard. The resolution especially targeted the Revolutionary Guards and the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), a state-owned shipping conglomerate that was allegedly involved in transporting items related to Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile development. It called on the international community to refuse financial and insurance services to both the IRGC and IRISL. Finally, it urged member states to ban new branches of all Iranian banks in their countries and prevent financial institutions operating in their territories from doing business in Iran.

In addition to imposing new sanctions, the Security Council listed several proposed areas of cooperation with which it would be willing to engage Iran to end the nuclear impasse. The proposal, which was initially presented to Tehran by the permanent five

Security Council members plus Germany in mid-2008, offered several energy, economic, agricultural, civil aviation, political and humanitarian incentives, if Tehran agreed to verifiably suspend uranium enrichment. Iran's U.N. ambassador responded that no amount of pressure would break his nation's determination to pursue its legal and inalienable right to enrichment.

U.N.S.C. Resolution 2231

The Security Council unanimously passed resolution 2231, which endorsed the July 14 nuclear deal reached by Iran and the world's six major powers – Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States. Under the agreement, Iran would reduce its number of centrifuges by two thirds and eliminate some 98 percent of its enriched uranium in return for sanctions relief.

The resolution requested the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor and verify Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). For example, the IAEA would monitor and contain the production, assembly and storage of centrifuges for 20 years and monitor uranium mines and mills for 25 years.

After the IAEA verifies Iran's compliance and the exclusively peaceful nature of its program, expected as soon as 2016, the United Nations will terminate sanctions set out in resolutions adopted between 2006 and 2015. Provisions of 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), 1835 (2008), 1929 (2010) and 2224 (2015) would be terminated. But for 10 years, sanctions would be subject to re-imposition, or snap-back, in the event of Iran's non-compliance. Under the deal, the European Union would suspend nuclear-related sanctions and the United States would waive certain sanctions.

The resolution also re-imposed the embargo on conventional arms and ballistic missile development. It called on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using ballistic missile technology, until October 2023 – or until the IAEA reaches the "Broader Conclusion" that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful activities, whichever is earlier. Conventional arms transfers to Iran were banned for five years or until the IAEA reaches the Broader Conclusion.

The Security Council decided that the resolution's provisions would, pending confirmation of the deal's implementation, expire 10 years after Adoption Day, which was on October 18, 2015. The expiration would effectively remove the Iranian nuclear issue from the U.N.S.C. agenda.

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