



Iran Reported to be Developing Nuclear Capable Missiles in Violation of JCPOA

The United Kingdom, Germany, and France have sent a letter to the United Nations alleging that the Islamic Republic of Iran is testing a missile “equipped with a maneuverable re-entry vehicle” capable of delivering a nuclear warhead on a distant target. If true, the action would violate a Security Council resolution on such activity.

According to the letter, which was circulated on Wednesday: “France, Germany and the United Kingdom assert once again our firm conclusion that Iran’s development of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and related technologies is inconsistent” with the provisions of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Ambassadors from the three European nations are urging UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to call out Iran’s actions as a violation of the 2015 resolution endorsing the JCPOA, otherwise known as the Iran-Nuclear Deal.

President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA in May of 2018, calling the deal “decaying and rotten” and an “embarrassment.” The United States instated sanctions against Iran shortly after the withdrawal from the JCPOA.

The three European powers claim that Iran tested a modified [Shahab-3](#) missile variant with a “re-entry vehicle” capable of dropping a warhead on targets up to 1,200 miles away.

Iran has denied the allegations. In a [tweet](#), Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Sarif condemned the letter as a “desperate falsehood to cover up their miserable incompetence in fulfilling bare minimum of their own JCPOA obligations.”

But Iran has been reportedly playing fast and loose with the JCPOA since before President Trump pulled out of the agreement in 2018. Less than a month after the U.S. withdrawal, Iran notified the International Atomic Energy Agency that it had opened a new nuclear enrichment facility at Natanz in the middle of the country.

The European Union and other powers still attached to the JCPOA condemned the new enrichment facility but didn’t quite consider it a deal-breaker.

UN Security Council [Resolution 2231](#) clearly states that “Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles DESIGNED to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology, until the date eight years after the JCPOA adoption day.”





Written by [James Murphy](#) on December 7, 2019

If the allegations by the UK, Germany and France are true, then Iran is clearly ignoring the JCPOA.

The letter cites footage released on social media on April 22, 2019 of an Iranian test of the Shahab-3 variant, which was “equipped with a maneuverable re-entry vehicle.” Further, the letter claimed that “The [Shahab-3 booster](#) used in the test is a Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 system and as such is technically capable of delivering a nuclear weapon.”

Besides their work on the Shahab-3, the letter claims there are other examples of Iranian duplicity concerning the JCPOA.

The letter also cites an August 3 launch of a Borkan-3, “a new liquid-propelled medium-range ballistic missile, traveling approximately 1,300 kilometers.” This launch was announced by Houthi forces in Yemen who are backed by Iran. The Borkan-3 is an upgrade of Iran’s Qiam-1 missile.

Another Shahab-3 variant was tested on July 24. The missile flew approximately 1,000 kilometers before coming to rest in Northern Iran.

In addition, Iran attempted to launch a Safir satellite launch vehicle although the test failed. UN experts have stated that launch vehicles such as the Safir have “a great deal of similar materials and technology” with ballistic missiles.

The European letter claims that these Iranian activities “are the latest in a long series of advances in Iranian ballistic missile technology” and that “Iran continues its proliferation of ballistic missile technology in the region.”

The UN Security Council has scheduled a December 19 meeting to address the implementation of the JCPOA.

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