



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 22 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres; Mr. Robert Malley, President and Chief Executive Officer of International Crisis Group; and Mr. Vitaly Naumkin, President of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences; as well as the statements delivered by Their Excellencies Mr. Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China; Mr. Kalla Ankourao, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad of the Niger; Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Mrs. Naledi Pandor, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa; Mr. Dang Minh Khoi, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam; and by the representatives of Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, in connection with the video-teleconference on “Maintenance of international peace and security: comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf region”, convened on Tuesday, 20 October 2020.

Statements were also delivered by Their Excellencies Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Mr. Ahmed Berwary, Head of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq; Mr. Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council; and Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; as well as by the representative of Qatar.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Vassily Nebenzia  
President of the Security Council



## Annex 1

### Statement by the Secretary-General

Let me begin by thanking Minister Sergey Lavrov and the Russian Federation for this initiative.

Given the complex and multifaceted challenges in the Persian Gulf region, it is important to reflect more deeply on how the international community, particularly the Security Council, can work in unison to promote peace and security in this vital part of the world.

I remain extremely concerned about the situation in Yemen, a local conflict that has become regionalized over time. Nearly six years of war have devastated the lives of millions of Yemenis and undermined confidence-building efforts in the region.

I have appealed for an immediate global ceasefire to focus on the one true fight: the battle against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Security Council has joined this call. But, as I said in my address to the General Assembly (see A/75/PV.4), we need to step up our efforts. The clock is ticking and people are dying. Yemen is exhibit A for the need to implement a ceasefire now.

Last week brought a ray of hope. The parties took promising steps by releasing more than 1,000 prisoners — the largest prisoner exchange since the start of the conflict. That action not only reunited many Yemeni families with their loved ones, but also demonstrated that the parties are able to reach agreement and follow through on their commitments.

The United Nations continues to facilitate negotiations between the Yemeni parties on the joint declaration, comprised of a nationwide ceasefire, economic and humanitarian confidence-building measures and the resumption of the political process.

Meanwhile, the security situation remains fragile. Over recent weeks, we have witnessed a further escalation of conflict, concentrated principally in Al-Jawf, Ma'rib and Al-Hudaydah governorates, with the latter being of significant concern, as it risks undermining the 2018 Stockholm Agreement. Fortunately, hostilities have subsided for now, but that is not enough. We need an immediate ceasefire and a return to the negotiating table to work out a political settlement to end the war. Nothing less will suffice. After the many years of conflict, our collective ambition is high, but necessary.

I acknowledge the painstaking compromise being asked of the parties to finalize this set of agreements. I once again call on them to continue engaging with my Special Envoy without preconditions in order to finalize the joint declaration. Yemeni women and youth must also be part of the process to ensure an inclusive and sustainable solution.

There is no doubt that tensions in the region have complicated our efforts to find a peaceful settlement in Yemen. Yet we know that a swift resolution of the Yemen conflict could contribute to building trust and confidence throughout the region. This conflict is a reminder that, unless we address the urgent and immediate regional challenges, instability could spread farther and wider.

Yemen remains the largest humanitarian emergency worldwide. Famine is looming, and the situation is exacerbated by the continued spread of COVID-19, a pandemic that respects no borders.

I was encouraged when several Gulf countries expressed support for my global ceasefire call and dispatched humanitarian aid to affected countries around the world. I commend those efforts and urge countries to waive any sanctions that

may adversely affect access to vital humanitarian and medical assistance during the pandemic. Whatever our differences, our common humanity should compel us to rise to the challenge in a spirit of solidarity.

Looking at the wider Persian Gulf region, it is clear that tensions are running high and confidence is low. Some countries may feel that others are interfering in their affairs or those of their neighbours. Some may hold the belief that their regional role is not recognized.

Since May 2019, a number of security incidents have raised tensions to new levels, heightening concerns of a larger conflict. These are a stark reminder that any miscalculation could quickly escalate.

I reiterate my call to all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from actions that could have destabilizing effects. The regional situation underscores the urgent need to work collectively to lower tensions and prevent conflict.

The first step towards de-escalation is identifying viable confidence-building measures that could address issues of mutual concern. The experience of the Cold War shows that, regardless of the confrontations and the deep divisions at the time, it was possible to launch the Helsinki process. Several countries have made suggestions — as have I — in that regard with respect to the situation in the Persian Gulf region.

It has not yet been possible to achieve consensus from all the key actors that need to be involved. But, remembering Helsinki, I hope it will be possible to establish a similar platform, starting with a number of confidence-building measures. Those may include, for example, ways to combat COVID-19, promote economic recovery, ensure unhindered maritime navigation and facilitate religious pilgrimages. In the longer term, I see the value of establishing a new regional security architecture to address the legitimate security concerns of all stakeholders.

As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of our Organization, the United Nations will continue our work to help reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf region.

Consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and my own good-offices role, I stand ready to convene any form of regional dialogue that could garner the necessary consensus of all the relevant parties.

We also fully support efforts, such as those launched by Kuwait, to promote dialogue and resolve tensions between members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. At a time when unity is needed to address the many challenges facing the region, I hope the dispute can soon be resolved.

I want to once again recognize and salute the mediating work of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who tragically passed away earlier this month.

With regard to regional stability, the issue of nuclear non-proliferation is critical. Since the beginning, I have always seen the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as an important instrument against nuclear proliferation and for regional security.

The enormity of the challenges ahead should not deter us. Let us work to create a climate of trust and improve the prospects for regional dialogue. Let us move beyond destructive rivalries and recognize what unites us. Let us keep the interests of the people of the region front and centre, including their aspirations for freedom, opportunities, a better standard of living and peace. That, above all, should compel us to intensify our collective efforts.

**Annex 2****Statement by the President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group, Robert Malley**

The Crisis Group is an organization dedicated to the prevention and resolution of deadly conflicts. Of late, we have been active in warning against risks of confrontation in the Gulf region and proposing practical ideas grounded in diplomatic engagement to avert them. We believe in the necessity of talking and listening to all sides. We therefore warmly welcome the Russian Federation's timely initiative in organizing this open debate.

Let me start with a statement that should be as alarming as it should be uncontentious: the region-wide conflict that now looms largest across the globe is a conflict nobody apparently wants — a conflict triggered by tensions in the Gulf region. Conditions for a war that would affect not just the Gulf but the broader Middle East are arguably riper than at any time in recent memory and could break out in any of a number of places — in the Strait of Hormuz, Iraq or Yemen. It is far from inevitable; no party wants it and, so far, all parties, for the most part, have shown the ability to calibrate their actions to avoid an escalation. But even finely tuned actions can have unintentional repercussions. Several times over the past two years, most notably during the attacks on the Saudi Aramco facilities and the killing of General Soleimani, a regional conflict has seemed possible.

On each occasion, the parties stepped back. Since those days of maximum threat, tensions have somewhat subsided. But we cannot be confident that all sides will always demonstrate such restraint. A single attack by rocket, drone or limpet mine could set off a military escalation between the United States and Iran and their respective regional allies and proxies that could prove impossible to contain.

It should also not be contentious that this situation serves no party's interests — not those of countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates, who have seen commercial vessels and their territory targeted by attacks they and others strongly suspect originated from Iran; not those of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has found itself the victim of a ferocious pressure campaign that has inflicted clear harm to its economy and its citizens' well-being, and which cost them one of their most important leaders due to a United States strike; not those of the United States, none of whose stated objectives in violating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has been fulfilled and whose personnel in Iraq are now under threat; not those of third parties who wish for a stable Gulf region for strategic or economic reasons; and perhaps, most important, not the interests of the region's citizens, Yemenis and Libyans, who have suffered most directly from intra-Gulf tensions, but also people across the Middle East whose aspirations for decent and peaceful lives have been stymied by rivalries and lack of cooperation among their Governments.

The first question I wish to address in my remarks today is, why that is the case? The second is, what might be done about it? I suspect that all sides will take issue with parts of what I have to say, which I will take as having fulfilled my purpose.

Many reasons lie behind the intense polarization that has infected the Gulf region and explain why its many rifts — between the United States and Iran, Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as among the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council — intersect in dangerous and potentially explosive ways. I will focus on one: the highly divergent perspectives on the sources of tensions, depending on whether one is sitting in Washington, D.C., Tehran, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Doha or elsewhere.

Saudi Arabia and its allies view in Iran's policies — in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon or Yemen — the ambitions of a would-be hegemon; they see the Islamic Republic as a growing threat whose regional aspirations need curbing lest it encircle them with its partners and proxies. Tehran, for its part, sees a region dominated by United States-backed Powers with superior military capabilities intent on isolating and weakening it; it also views Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as being in collusion with the United States to economically coerce, and ultimately replace, its leadership. With a world view formed in the traumatizing crucible of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war and faced with more heavily armed adversaries, Iranian leaders subscribe to the country's strategic doctrine, which is based on its asymmetric military capabilities and support for regional allies, including armed non-State actors.

Making matters worse has been the absence of any institutional mechanism for parties to air their grievances and, at least, try to narrow gaps. Indeed, there is at present no meaningful channel between the United States and Iran, no official one between Iran and Saudi Arabia and little real diplomacy beyond rhetorical jousting between rival Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Neither is there a single regional organization that embraces all Gulf actors that could serve as a framework for confidence-building and de-escalation measures.

Whatever organizations exist tend to fuel tensions. And whatever the parties do tends to reinforce their foes' pre-existing perceptions. What Tehran presents as defensive policies designed to reduce the threats it faces, Riyadh and others perceive as acts of aggression. They inevitably prompt pushback by Iran's foes and, to that extent, the Islamic Republic's current approach is a formula for enduring regional instability. But, by the same token, efforts by Washington, Riyadh and others that focus exclusively on aggressively pushing back against Iran are likely to prompt the country's leadership to double down on its current approach. In particular, the maximum pressure campaign undertaken by the United States, with the support and encouragement of most of its Gulf partners, coupled with the almost unfettered supply of conventional weapons by Western Governments to those Gulf States, inevitably leads Iran to intensify use of its own asymmetric tools.

So, what is to be done? Crisis Group is a firm believer in the power of diplomacy, and we see some examples of successful attempts at regional de-escalation.

One such precedent was the Iran nuclear deal, or the JCPOA. I participated in those negotiations and so, admittedly, I am biased. I am convinced that the deal helped reduce tensions and could have paved the way for more intensive and broader diplomacy. For that reason, my organization regrets the United States decision to withdraw, and applauds European efforts to keep the JCPOA alive. But I am well aware that views among those assembled today vary, and I am not here to relitigate that question.

The point is, whether one supports the JCPOA or not, it offers a few lessons. The negotiations succeeded not owing to mutual trust but because they were multilateral, because they combined mutual pressure with realistic goals and because the various sides recognized one another's core interests.

It is with these considerations in mind that Crisis Group published a report last April entitled "The Middle East between Collective Security and Collective Breakdown", outlining steps that should be taken to reduce risks of war. Its core premise will be familiar to many: that the Gulf region needs to initiate a collective and inclusive security dialogue encompassing the six members of the Gulf Cooperation, Iran and Iraq, and aiming at diminishing tensions.

Governments in the Gulf that are least involved in hostilities but could be most harmed if fighting erupts — I am thinking of Kuwait and Oman — could jointly seek

to bring their more powerful and more directly involved neighbours — Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia — into such an informal mechanism.

European and other relevant Governments could facilitate the process, helping pass some messages in the initial phase of contact and offering technical advice and quiet encouragement as the process develops. The first objective would simply be to open communication channels.

The United Nations, too, could play an important role. Resolution 598 (1987), which ended the Iran-Iraq war, provides a mandate for the Secretary-General to convene a regional security dialogue to lay the groundwork for a security architecture tolerable to all sides. As we just heard from the Secretary-General, he is prepared to do so. At a minimum, the Security Council ought to encourage and endorse a Gulf-led process if it begins to take hold.

Discussions within a Gulf security mechanism, inspired by the Helsinki process, could start by trying to reach agreement on shared principles governing inter-State relations such as non-interference — directly or via local proxy — and respect for each State's territorial integrity, and try to identify each side's motivations, core concerns and threat perceptions. They could then evolve towards concrete confidence-building measures.

Initially, these could include modest steps: reducing inflammatory rhetoric; issuing unilateral statements in support of dialogue and joint statements outlining shared principles and interests; or opening direct communication channels, such as a de-confliction hotline among Gulf States and with outside actors whose military assets are deployed in the Gulf.

The various sides could also address matters of shared concern, such as the cross-border adverse effects of climate change, deteriorating water quality, disaster preparedness, the spread of the coronavirus disease, maritime security and religious tourism and pilgrimages. The United Nations, through its multitude of technical agencies, could support such initiatives.

If and when initial discussions start to yield results, they could be scaled up to focus on ways to de-escalate tensions through shared security mechanisms such as prior notification of troop movements and military exercises or allowing adversaries to send military experts to observe such manoeuvres. Eventually, Gulf parties could explore ways of fostering a durable cooperative regional security framework that includes all main stakeholders.

There is much more that could and should be done, notably taking steps to resolve the myriad conflicts, from Syria to Libya to Yemen, that have been fuelled both by tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran and by those involving the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Turkey and Qatar, which have caused unspeakable human suffering and remain potential flashpoints for a broader conflagration.

The bottom line is this: the main threat that the region faces today is not so much a war of choice but an inadvertent one resulting from miscalculation, misinterpretation or lack of timely communication. Key actors in the Gulf have refined the game of brinkmanship to the point of playing it right up to the edge. The result has been the fraying of the thread dividing war from no war. To generate the political will to act, the worst of times may offer the best opportunity, and conditions in the Gulf arguably have reached that point.

An inclusive, collective regional security dialogue aimed at lessening tensions may have only a small chance of materializing and an even smaller chance of success. But under current circumstances, it would be irresponsible not to give it a try.

I want to take this opportunity to make one final point. We strive to be an impartial conflict-resolution organization, and I hope that was discernible in the ideas that I put forward today. That is what our staff do: they try to understand all parties' perspectives, reflect them as best they can and propose pragmatic solutions. That is what our colleague Michael Kovrig was doing in his work on China's foreign policy. This is neither the time nor place to discuss his case. But I cannot conclude without appealing to the Chinese authorities, if they are listening, to understand the mission that he was pursuing, end his now almost two-year detention and allow him at long last to be reunited with his loved ones and continue his work towards a more peaceful world.



**Annex 3****Statement by the President of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) and Academician of the RAS, Professor Vitaly Naumkin**

[Original: Russian]

Today humankind is living in anticipation of certain tectonic shifts in the world order, which is experiencing a serious crisis. Collective institutions are disintegrating; old and new fault lines and conflicts, including with the use of weapons, persist; challenges and threats to security in various regions are growing; and established security mechanisms have been undermined or do not work. All this is superimposed on the negative impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which has struck the whole world.

In the Gulf subregion, which is both important and vulnerable owing to its tremendous geoeconomic and geostrategic significance and openness, including to external players, tensions are increasing, seriously threatening security and political and economic stability in the subregion and the world. Relations among many States of the region are in crisis. The sometimes unpredictable and rapidly changing situation that is developing makes the emergence of a security dilemma inevitable against the backdrop of the irresistible desire of States in conflict with one another for absolute superiority in terms of power.

In that context, it should be noted that the ambiguous perception by the States of the subregion of the place and role of their neighbours and their regular mutual accusations of activities aimed at destabilization, against a background of deep mutual mistrust and ignorance of their neighbours' concerns, constitute a serious factor of instability.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has been an important deterrent to escalation in recent years. Despite the fact that the United States unilaterally withdrew from it and restored unilateral sanctions against Iran, the nuclear deal continues to operate thanks to the solidarity of its other participants.

Today, several new elements can be cited in the development of the situation in that part of the Middle East. These include, for example, the entry into the subregional security sphere of several new regional players. Some States located in the Persian Gulf already consider them to be security providers, alongside the traditional ones. This includes, above all, Turkey, as well as Israel, as a result of its normalization of relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. The presence of new players there has met with satisfaction on the part of some Powers and fear and acute concern on the part of others.

Among the new elements at play is increased activity on the part of the numerous non-State armed groups operating there, which are challenging State armies. Through participation in armed conflict, they have gained extensive experience in the use of both non-traditional and modern combat methods and have demonstrated the ability to learn quickly. At the same time, the very nature of the wars waged in the region is changing, which the participants therein do not always take into account. There is a clear reluctance on the part of traditional external security providers, including those that have military bases there and are trusted by local political elites, to intervene to protect them in crisis situations.

One important element is the fact that the threats, challenges and risks facing the States of the subregion, although their line-up as a whole remains the same and the demands of the various sides are often asymmetric and appear incompatible,



increasingly become common to all parties. Thus, countering them and de-escalating and minimizing the risk of conflict will be possible only through collective, solidarity-based efforts that are free of confrontational approaches and demonization, using a phased approach, taking into account the concerns and interests of all local players and with respect for their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

It is this approach that is laid down in the concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf proposed by Russia in 2019, the implementation of which would allow the normalization of the situation in the subregion. It is clear that harmonizing positions on that ambitious plan is a difficult process requiring courage on the part of the actors involved, a willingness to compromise and the abandonment of unilateral approaches.

In the same vein, in August the President of the Russian Federation put forward a proposal to convene a summit of the five permanent members of the Security Council, with the participation of Iran and Germany, in order to agree on the parameters of joint efforts aimed at the creation of reliable mechanisms for ensuring security and strengthening confidence-building measures in the Persian Gulf zone.

Unfortunately, to date the policy of unilateral measures has prevailed over that of collective measures. Reversing that trend, although necessary, will not be easy. We can think of examples in history when, at the cost of the selfless efforts of some Powers, including the permanent members of the Security Council, it was possible, thanks to their commitment and goodwill, to do so.

In terms of the common, high-priority threats and challenges for the States of the subregion, in the military-political sphere they should include in particular the existence and escalation of armed conflicts, such as the bloody conflict in Yemen, which requires an effective response and has had dire consequences for the humanitarian situation in that country; international terrorism, centres of which are located on the territory of the subregion; excessive militarization; and the activities of non-State armed actors.

Non-military challenges include organized crime, drug trafficking, water scarcity, difficulties in ensuring an uninterrupted supply of energy resources, environmental pollution and uncontrolled migration. The unresolved Palestinian-Israeli conflict will continue to negatively affect the security and stability of the entire Middle East region.

The issue of confidence-building measures and transparency is key to the initial stage of the process of a rapprochement among the parties; that is where progress can be made. Let us recall the Helsinki process. Of course, there is no need to call for reproducing the European experience, which, moreover, is several decades removed from us, but the success achieved by opposing blocs of States that have managed to agree and develop an effective system of confidence-building measures and create the still-functioning Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) deserves attention.

It is no coincidence that a number of politicians and experts speak figuratively about the creation of an OSCE for the Persian Gulf. I cannot exclude the possibility that elements of some of the confidence-building measures developed at that time, including with the active and creative participation of Russian — then Soviet — diplomats, especially in the military sphere, may be relevant in the course of a dialogue among Gulf States.

With regard to the current situation, there could be, for example, agreements on general restraint, on refusal to use force, on prior notification about major military exercises and naval manoeuvres, and then also on the implementation of the

observation and monitoring of specific types of military activity — or to start with, at least, on the exchange of very general information — and on prior notification about specific types of such activity that involve fixed numbers of military personnel and equipment.

The proposals to hold a dialogue on military doctrines, establish hot lines and create demilitarized zones deserve to be discussed. No one needs a “big war” that, should one break out, could be devastating for the subregion and spill over its borders.

In that regard, it is worth mentioning the importance of the issue of maritime security. Here the common challenges facing all States are terrorism, including terrorist attacks against ships, arms and drug smuggling, armed piracy, illegal migration and human trafficking, biosphere pollution, incidents and natural disasters. To successfully counter those challenges, the cooperation of all coastal States is imperative, and international organizations and interested extraregional Powers can assist in that endeavour. It is clear that the United Nations should play an extremely important role in this process.

During our informal consultations in Moscow a few months ago at the level of experts from a number of States from the region and outside, discussions were held on various approaches to possible first steps towards the creation of a collective security system in the subregion. One approach holds that it is necessary, first and foremost, to conduct a multilateral dialogue among all countries of the region with the participation of key global actors. The experts also defined, in various ways, the borders of the region and the global players involved. Another approach stressed the necessity of focusing on building mutual understanding between Iran and Saudi Arabia as key States of the region. A third approach focused on the need to create a system of multiple bilateral contacts that would compensate for the lack of diplomatic relations between a number of States located in the region, which creates serious problems in terms of communication.

Is it possible, in principle, to reach a consensus on the establishment of an inclusive collective security system in the subregion? Without going into detail, let me recall that the concept presented by Russia proposes as a goal the holding of an international conference on security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf, and that an initiative group should be formed in the course of consultations among interested players in order to organize it. It is clear that Russian diplomacy does not impose on anyone a detailed plan for creating a system that the States of the region themselves must develop. The concept, as I understand it, is a document open for discussion.

A number of proposals have already been made by experts. Some of them spoke, during the consultations I mentioned earlier, in favour of first creating a new dialogue format — a kind of meeting without any rigidly fixed obligations or institutional attributes — while others suggested devising a system of “baskets” for discussing cooperation and security issues, taking into account the specifics of the subregion. Perhaps this could be the beginning of the dialogue process, albeit at an informal level.

**Annex 4****Statement by the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi**

[Original: English and Chinese]

China supports Russia's initiative of convening this Security Council ministerial meeting on the Gulf region and is pleased to see Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov presiding over it. I listened attentively to the remarks by Secretary-General Guterres and wish to express my appreciation for his contribution.

The Gulf region is a focal point of the world's attention. The ongoing tensions in the region are taking a toll on peace and security in the region and beyond. China hopes that this ministerial meeting will provide a new opportunity to ease the situation and bring new prospects of peace and tranquillity in the region.

All Security Council members and countries of the region should truly focus on the theme of the maintenance of international peace and security with good faith and goodwill. They should seriously examine the root causes of tensions, work hard to find the key to the door leading to peace and be more responsive to the expectations of the international community and in particular the people in the region. With that in mind, I should like to share with the Council some of my views.

First, it is vital to uphold the rule of law to jointly build peace in the Gulf. When addressing the flashpoints in the region, it is key to follow the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and abide by the basic norms governing international relations, including respect for sovereignty and the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is equally vital to oppose unilateral sanctions, denounce the imposition of pressure by force and reject double standards in selective application of international law.

The United Nations should be allowed to carry out good offices fully to encourage dialogue, and mediation efforts by the Gulf Cooperation Council and other regional organizations should be supported. All parties should earnestly implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and fulfil their international obligations.

Secondly, it is key to uphold good-neighbourliness to jointly realize security in the Gulf. The Gulf is the common home of all countries and ethnic groups in the region. Because no country can choose its neighbours, seeking harmonious coexistence is the only right option. The Arabs, the Persians and other splendid civilizations, as well as other ethnic groups, all have a long history, and, importantly, the great wisdom to resolve problems. The parties need to seek common ground while recognizing their differences, rise above the differences in their systems and set aside disputes between religious sects. They should, through dialogue and consultation, seek to balance the pursuit of interests by various ethnic groups, religions and countries so as to create conditions for security in the region.

Thirdly, it is imperative to uphold fairness and justice to jointly ensure stability in the Gulf. The Gulf region belongs to Gulf countries, and the local people are the true masters of the region. On family matters of Gulf States, non-regional countries may offer constructive help, but should not overstep, much less manoeuvre for selfish gains. They should bear in mind the overall interests of peace and stability across the region, abandon the practice of pitting one side against another, take an impartial and balanced position, sincerely promote peace and dialogue and help stabilize the situation on the ground. As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is raging around the globe, it is crucial to step up cooperation with Gulf States to beat the virus, promote economic recovery, improve people's well-being and consolidate the foundation for stability in the region.

The Iranian nuclear issue is a key factor in the dynamics of the Gulf region. We have noted that, despite the groundless suppressing and threatening, the great majority of Security Council members remain committed to an objective and fair position, firmly uphold the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and resolution 2231 (2015) and resolutely safeguard the authority and effectiveness of the Council and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The first phase of the implementation of the resolution was completed on 18 October. We hope relevant parties will continue to take a responsible approach so that any future action will facilitate the implementation, help address the concerns of different parties and contribute to peace in the region.

China attaches great importance to the legitimate security concerns of the Arab States in the Gulf region. As such, China has proposed to establish, while upholding the JCPOA, a platform for multilateral dialogue for the Gulf region, where parties can discuss current regional security issues and manage crises through collective consultation. Such a platform will help dispel misgivings in implementing the JCPOA, lend impetus to de-escalation and contribute to shaping new consensus on maintaining peace and stability in the region.

It will be a platform of equality and openness. We suggest all parties follow the principle of mutual respect, mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, join the dialogue process and address respective concerns through consultation on equal footing. While the JCPOA signatories and the Gulf States are natural participants in the dialogue, countries outside the region with legitimate concerns may also positively contribute to viable solutions and security and stability in the region.

It will be a platform of action. We suggest all parties follow the principles of reciprocity, taking synchronized steps and working in the same direction. Parties need to jointly take confidence-building measures and show goodwill to gradually nurture greater confidence in negotiations. As early steps, parties may first commit to ceasing hostilities and not resorting to military means for settling differences, thereby moving towards the shared goal of maintaining peace and stability in the region. The Security Council should support and help such conducive actions by all parties.

It will be a platform of continued advancement. We suggest all parties follow the principle of taking on easier tasks first and seeking incremental progress. Parties may start from specific issues where they can easily find converging interests, and initiate dialogue on energy, shipping, trade and other relatively less sensitive areas. When more consensus has been reached, the dialogue agenda may be gradually adjusted in the light of the changing situation to cover sensitive areas of regional security. The Security Council may endorse the outcome of the dialogue in a timely manner, encourage sustainable progress in the dialogue and ensure the irreversibility of its outcome. China is flexible with respect to the ways to implement the initiative. It can start from track 1, and then move on to track 1.5 and track 2. China is also ready to seek greater synergy between our initiative and similar ideas and proposals by Russia and other countries.

Dialogue will not be smooth sailing, and neither will it reach its goal overnight. Yet no matter how long the journey might be, step by step, we will eventually reach the destination. The first courageous step, even a small one, by the parties concerned will be one giant step towards peace.

China is always a good friend and partner of the Gulf States. Over the years, China has taken an active part in regional affairs and committed to easing the situation. We have been deepening mutually beneficial cooperation with the Gulf States and helping consolidate the foundation for development and stability

in the region. China has also been working actively with regional countries to fight COVID-19, and will provide vaccines, once they have been developed and deployed, to the Gulf States as needed.

We will work with all countries in the Gulf region and with the international community to contribute more to regional security and stability. Together, we can build the Gulf region into an oasis of security.

**Annex 5****Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Living Abroad of the Niger, Kalla Ankourao**

[Original: French]

At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude to the Russian Federation for organizing this debate on the maintenance of international peace and security in connection with the situation in the Persian Gulf region.

I would also like to add the Niger's voice to those of the other nations of the world to convey our most heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Kuwait following the death of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This is an excellent opportunity for the Security Council to discuss an issue that is of great importance to global security.

Peace and stability in the Persian Gulf is an absolute necessity for the Middle East and, moreover, the world. I remain convinced that the various contributions to this debate will lead to concrete proposals that will enable us to find solutions to the many challenges facing the region.

The Middle East, and in particular the Persian Gulf region, rich in diversity and with immense natural resources, have all the necessary assets to ensure prosperity and peace for their 200 million inhabitants. Indeed, the countries of the region hold the world's largest reserves of oil and gas, share largely the same Islamic culture and are bound by the same millennial history and geography. But unfortunately, the region continues to be the theatre of wars and tensions among countries that were destined to live in peace and harmony. As in most conflicts, the interference of international actors is the primary cause of the instability and persistent tensions in this region. These international actors, each protecting its interests through alliances and agreements with the countries of the region, contribute to fierce rivalries between countries, against the backdrop of an arms race that is increasingly worrisome.

The creation of a truly inclusive regional security system as a basis for ensuring a decent future for all the peoples of this region of the world is also inextricably linked to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. My delegation remains convinced that neither Israel nor the Palestinians can ultimately and sustainably realize their legitimate aspirations for security for one and the creation of an independent and viable State for the other without a negotiated solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, namely, the creation of two States living side by side.

Likewise, concerning the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, which have direct consequences for the entire region, my delegation remains convinced that there can be no military solution to those crises. The only viable way to resolve them must be the resolute quest for a lasting political solution, inspired and supported by the Syrians and Yemenis themselves, with the support of the United Nations on the basis of its relevant resolutions. We call on the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to spare no effort in supporting peace processes and finding solutions to humanitarian challenges, which are amplified by the persistence of conflict.

Regarding the 2015 Iranian nuclear agreement, endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 2231 (2015), the Niger, like the overwhelming majority of Council members, remains convinced that that resolution remains the appropriate international legal framework for the settlement of disputes on the issue. We

therefore encourage all parties to remain committed to its full implementation and to act responsibly and in accordance with the standards of multilateralism. I wish to reiterate my country's conviction that there is no alternative to multilateralism and dialogue in the resolution of conflicts involving several nations.

I wish also to reiterate our support for the call by the Secretary-General for a comprehensive ceasefire on all parties to the conflict in the region and to commit to respecting international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Notwithstanding certain violent episodes in the region that have on occasion given rise to pessimism, we remain convinced that the achievement of a prosperous and peaceful Middle East where good-neighbourly relations and friendship predominate, on the basis of mutual respect and of the principle of non-interference, is possible. To that end, the Persian Gulf must be equipped with an inclusive mechanism for cooperation and dispute settlement, with a strong involvement on the part of the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations.

The Council could support such a regional initiative, as it would constitute a strong signal of recognition of the key role that regional organizations play in the peaceful settlement of conflict. In addition, the United Nations could strengthen its presence and become more involved in the quest for solutions to the crises in the Persian Gulf by appointing a representative or a special envoy.

I would end my remarks by quoting from the address by His Excellency Mr. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of the Republic of the Niger, to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session:

“The impact of the [coronavirus disease] pandemic requires us to revisit the way in which we organize ourselves. What worked 75 years ago no longer works” (*see A/75/PV.8*).

That reflection applies especially to that particular region of the world.



**Annex 6****Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov**

[Original: Russian]

In organizing today's meeting, we proceeded from the assumption that ensuring stability, security and peace in the Persian Gulf region was an important and urgent task for the international community as a whole. The difficult situation in that area is having a destabilizing effect on international relations. We therefore believe that the Security Council, which is responsible for maintaining the international peace and security, should maintain its focus on this issue.

Today we propose the possibility of trying together, without trying to settle accounts or resorting to accusations or pathetic rhetoric, to think "from scratch" to avoid fresh shocks in order to move the situation back from the brink.

Everyone remembers the atmosphere earlier this year when many feared the potential outbreak of a large-scale war in the Gulf. We managed to avoid a worst-case scenario, but we see no grounds for complacency. The situation remains unstable. Dangerous and unpredictable scenarios can unfold at any time, especially considering the existence of differences and conflicts of a religious nature.

We have no doubt that everyone wants the Gulf region to be peaceful and predictable. We continue to see that attempts at unilateral actions can lead only to an impasse. Blackmail and dictatorship, and the demonization of and accusations against only one party are wrong and dangerous. We must stop recriminations and suspicions and say no to sanctions, pressure, ultimatums and provocative actions, no matter which side they come from. We firmly believe that this can be done even amid today's continuing tensions.

We need a creative philosophy. Collective confidence-building efforts based on respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, in strict accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, must be the key to improving the situation in the Gulf region.

The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), aimed at resolving the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme, to which the Russian Federation remains fully committed, remains an important element in preventing the escalation of the situation in the Gulf region, as mentioned by the speaker before me. The JCPOA was a major political and diplomatic milestone that made it possible to avert the threat of an armed conflict and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Like all responsible parties to the agreement, Russia remains fully committed to this agreement and is convinced that the positive results of the difficult but rewarding collegial efforts made must be preserved and defended.

In that regard, the President of the Russian Federation, V.V. Putin, proposed an initiative to hold an online meeting of Heads of State, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as Germany and Iran. The goal is to outline steps aimed at averting any further escalation and establishing a reliable collective security system in the Persian Gulf. We thank those who have expressed support for that initiative.

The Russian concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf area, which we put forward in the 1990s and updated in 2019, is aimed at creating a reliable structure for regional security. We advocate the implementation of a constructive, unifying agenda and the creation of mechanisms for a collective response to the numerous challenges and threats, with the participation of the coastal countries of the Persian

Gulf and including Iran and its Arab neighbours. We also propose involving the five permanent members of the Security Council, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as well as other influential and interested parties in practical steps to implement those ideas.

The path to the final goal will definitely be long and will not be easy, and the countries of the region must travel it themselves. Non-regional players must help them to enable them to start moving towards one another, gradually and patiently eliminating the historical layers of mutual grievances and contradictions. That requires ongoing, engaged discussions and delicate approaches. We are ready to provide all possible assistance and talk with all our partners.

There is no doubt that the considerable mediation potential of the United Nations, including within the framework of the good-offices missions of the Secretary-General, could also be useful here. We would recall once again that in its resolution 598 (1987), the Security Council instructed the Secretary-General to work together with parties from the region on measures to strengthen security and stability there. It is important to take stock of what has been done and what remains to be done to fulfil that direct instruction.

Our concept is not the ultimate truth but represents food for thought that we hope will be useful. A fundamental prerequisite for moving in the direction in which we all need to go is strict adherence to the principle of the indivisibility of security. That implies that the security problems of one country cannot be solved at the expense of or to the detriment of any other State.

I propose that we consider today's meeting as an invitation to overcome the differences that have built up by opening a respectful dialogue based on taking into account the concerns of all parties without exception and based on international law. I am confident that by acting together, openly and impartially, pooling our political will and creative potential, we can help the Gulf States overcome this difficult historical period and create an effective regional security system, or, as a first step, to at least agree upon the basic principles.

**Annex 7****Statement by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Naledi Pandor**

South Africa wishes to commend the Russian Federation for its stewardship of the Security Council for the month of October, and I thank you, Minister Lavrov, for having convened this meeting today to review the situation in the Gulf region.

As we heard from the interventions already made, security in the Gulf is intrinsically linked to global security, given the significant economic role and strategic position of the region. It is in the interest of us all for the countries in the region to be able to address the heightened tensions and protracted conflict that has come to characterize the region for so long.

The tensions between key regional players and their allies are disconcerting, as their actions spill over to the wider region and further destabilize an already fragile Middle East. It is in that context that we reiterate that sustainable peace and stability in the Gulf and the wider Middle East region requires an end to its core peace and security challenge, which is the occupation of Palestine. The international community, including countries in the Gulf region, should continue to work towards a just and peaceful end to the occupation, guided by the relevant United Nations resolutions pertinent to a viable two-State solution that will guarantee and safeguard the human rights and dignity of all people on both sides of the agreed Green Line. Approaches that seek to undermine the internationally agreed parameters and that do not take into account the views and aspirations of the Palestinians undermine the prospects for peace and justice.

We have seen the devastating impact that meddling by external Powers, especially in this region, can have on a State and its citizens. The lessons learned from the illegal, unauthorized invasion of Iraq remain a terrifying example thereof. The aftermath of the invasion of Iraq, which led to war and devastation, illustrates the consequences of countries resorting to unsanctioned military action, without due regard for international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

As the custodian of international peace and security, the Security Council should support any initiative by States in the Gulf region to work collectively to address the security situation and instability in the region. Such initiatives will lead to the restoration of peace and stability not only in the Gulf region but also the broader Middle East. It will allow for countries in the Gulf to work together to address broader issues, including countering terrorism and promoting sustainable development. South Africa believes, based on our own experience, that regional and intergovernmental organizations remain critical partners in resolving conflict and should remain impartial in the drive towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

As a matter of principle, South Africa supports multilateral diplomacy, adherence to international law and the peaceful resolution of conflict. This is deeply rooted in its foreign policy,

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) illustrates how diplomacy and negotiations can resolve challenges between States prior to these evolving into full-scale conflict. We wish to reiterate that South Africa views the JCPOA as one of most important diplomatic achievements in the area of nuclear non-proliferation since the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We believe that it is an excellent example of collective action to consolidate peace through cooperation and collaboration on the basis of a binding agreement. We are also of the view that the JCPOA has contributed significantly to the reduction of tensions over Iran's nuclear

programme and remains vital in promoting peace, stability and the normalization of relations within the Gulf.

In an effort to avoid any measures that would challenge the integrity of the processes of the Council, South Africa will continue to encourage the States members of the Council to act responsibly and in a manner that promotes peace and builds confidence and trust among nations.

South Africa will remain resolute in supporting efforts to resolve tensions between all stakeholders in the Gulf region and will always promote dialogue rather than antagonism in order to safeguard the gains already made in support of the maintenance of broader international peace and security.

**Annex 8****Statement by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Dang Minh Khoi**

I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate on a comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf. I also thank the Secretary-General and other briefers for their valuable insights.

The Persian Gulf is a historically unique region characterized by its own distinct civilization and cultural identity. It has for centuries deeply integrated into the world through people-to-people exchanges, commerce and religious movements. Today the Gulf remains at the core of the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East and has enormous economic and energy potential to bring about peace, security and prosperity for the whole region and beyond.

In years past, countries in the Gulf have strived for socioeconomic development and improved regional cooperation, thereby contributing to addressing the root causes of regional security problems and global challenges, including poverty, inequality and social injustice. It is also encouraging that those countries are assisting one another in the fight against the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Yet certain tensions in the Persian Gulf that have lasted for decades and were recently escalated by a series of incidents raise grave concerns about the threat of a spiral of military confrontation in the region and have multifaceted implications for international peace and security. The Middle East will be faced with developments it does not wish to see if instability in the Gulf continues unabated, with the resultant unpredictable impacts on the ongoing complex and intertwined regional conflicts and humanitarian crises, such as in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Palestine and Lebanon. That dangerous scenario needs to be excluded. In that regard, I wish to put special emphasis on the following.

First, all parties, regional and extraregional, have crucial roles and responsibilities in maintaining peace and stability in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as a whole. The current situation together with specificities and peculiarities requires efforts to uphold international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant Security Council resolutions and international commitments. Efforts must also be made exercise self-restraint, refrain from actions and statements that could provoke tensions, and promote dialogue and negotiations to settle differences. We reiterate the call on all parties to conflict to heed the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire and facilitate humanitarian activities.

Secondly, although the idea of a collective security arrangement in the Persian Gulf has been floated for years, the changing regional political landscape makes the time ripe for further exploration and to turn the idea into concrete action. Such a mechanism should be customized to regional circumstances and anchored in the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, particularly those of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes.

We also believe that dialogue on common regional security interests can pave the way to and play a significant role in reducing tensions and building trust. Among those common interests are addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, safeguarding maritime security and freedom of navigation, combating terrorism and illicit arms trafficking, and promoting disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the full implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Thirdly, the role of regional organizations is indispensable for a comprehensive security approach. This is vividly drawn from our experience in which the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plays a central role in our regional security architecture and has helped to transform South-East Asia from a region of hostilities into a cohesive, integrated and people-centred community.

We could encourage and strengthen the collaboration between regional and subregional organizations in the Gulf and the Middle East and the United Nations and the Security Council in conflict prevention, mediation and preventive diplomacy in line with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

Viet Nam has friendly and cooperative relationships with all countries in the Persian Gulf region and the Middle East. We remain strongly committed to making meaningful contributions in the Security Council and other relevant forums to foster an environment conducive to dialogue and cooperation for the benefit of peace, stability and prosperity in this region.

**Annex 9****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Philippe Kridelka**

[Original: French]

Let me first thank the President of the Security Council for organizing today's debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his inspiring briefing.

Today's debate is indeed more than necessary as the Gulf is in the grip of growing tensions. It is the responsibility of the Security Council to address the issue with a view to preventing any escalation and conflict there that would be dramatic for the region and for international peace and security. We must also aim for lasting stability by contributing to building a regional security architecture.

Belgium is a founding member of the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Accordingly, my country encourages all regional approaches based on dialogue, cooperation and, ultimately, integration, and on the defence of common interests and values. This idea is not new for the Gulf region or the wider Middle East, but it is now time to put it into practice. To that end, three guidelines seem to me important.

First, the countries of the region suffer from a cruel lack of mutual trust, which thwarts any joint initiative to build a common future. Trust is not something that can be decreed at a major conference; rather, it is built up, step by step, with very concrete actions, admittedly modest at the beginning, but with the potential to create a virtuous circle. The first focus of any initiative should therefore be the development of concrete confidence-building measures between countries that want to move forward. I am talking in this regard about concrete steps in very circumscribed areas where the abstract notion of common interests could be translated into tangible benefits for all, including, for example, projects in water management, environmental preservation, energy transition and economic diversification, and joint initiatives in the field of health, quality tourism and cultural heritage preservation.

Secondly, regional ownership of these initiatives is a key element. There is no point in trying to impose turnkey models, even if they are motivated by the best of intentions. This does not mean that countries outside the region have no role to play; on the contrary, outside countries can support confidence-building measures in a very concrete way and share their experiences. Indeed, Belgium believes that the EU, and other actors as well have a historical experience of regional integration and cooperation that can be a source of inspiration. The OSCE, too, in the wake of the Helsinki process, which the Secretary-General has mentioned several times, has built up a remarkable inventory of confidence- and security-building measures. Let us make use of these rich resources.

Thirdly, the United Nations has an assistance role to play in this project, as the Secretary-General has just underlined. The United Nations can, through its institutional resources and the shared values of the Charter, support preventive diplomacy efforts and thereby help to bridge national divides.

Another aspect that cannot be avoided is the overarmament of the region. Ultimately, disarmament and non-proliferation in the conventional and non-conventional fields must become a common objective. In this respect, Belgium supports the Iranian nuclear agreement. My country joins its European partners and the majority of the members of the Security Council in defending the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with conviction. The JCPOA is one of the great successes of nuclear non-proliferation, dialogue and diplomacy. Since its



entry into force, the Plan of Action has made it possible to guarantee the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian programme, which is also why Belgium regrets the United States withdrawal of from it and the reimposition of unilateral sanctions, on the one hand, and the increasing non-compliance by Iran with its commitments, on the other hand. We reject any less-for-less approach.

Still in the field of security, my country believes that putting an end to the conflict in Yemen, an important point also mentioned by the Secretary-General, could represent a building block in the gradual establishment of a future regional structure for dialogue and cooperation. We therefore call for a real political commitment by all parties to a joint declaration that would pave the way for peace and for greater cooperation and mutual trust in the region.

In conclusion, I would like to mention two principles that should guide our action: dialogue and cooperation. Only through dialogue and cooperation can we develop a common political vision. These are certainly not easy principles, but they are indispensable for moving forward.

**Annex 10****Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We thank the Russian Federation for convening this important debate and the briefers for their briefings.

We welcome the presence of the Secretary-General and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs who are with us this morning.

At the outset, we would like to emphasize our deep appreciation for the Gulf region's diversity, cultural plurality and undisputed place in the historical heritage of humankind. Despite this, we are convinced, with great regret, that ideological differences have imposed a kind of system of regional geopolitical rivalry that has, on more than one occasion, placed the Gulf region at the centre of the world's attention as the axis of threats to international peace and security. While recognizing the efforts made to reduce tensions, strengthen relations and combat extreme violence throughout the region, including terrorism, there remain destabilizing elements that influence and stubbornly deepen this regrettable dynamic.

We would like to highlight the fact that years of conflict, violence and terrorism have had a devastating impact on a large part of the region's population, where poverty and inequality prevail despite the region's indisputable wealth. To achieve peace and development, we must redouble our efforts aimed at bringing to the forefront good governance, non-tolerance of corruption and impunity, and unwavering respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. By addressing these issues as root causes, we prevent crisis situations from arising or being defused before they escalate.

The influence of illicit arms transfers and missile proliferation at the margins of Security Council resolutions encourages violence, insecurity and reduces the chances of arriving at lasting solutions. Furthermore, respect for the right of maritime navigation is a determining factor in maintaining the security of the Gulf. It is imperative to prevent a recurrence of the hostile actions that have taken place in the Strait of Hormuz, considering that this strait is key to international trade. A crisis in this area could thwart the world financial order.

Finally, in relation to the current challenges to the fulfilment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), we stress our concern about Iran's gradual reduction of its nuclear commitments, the violations of the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015) relating to conventional weapons, and its involvement in destabilizing activities in the region. We reiterate our call on Iran, as a key actor in the geopolitics of the Gulf and the Middle East, to return to full compliance with the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015) and avoid hostile actions and inflammatory rhetoric. The full implementation of the commitments agreed by all parties to the Plan of Action is vital to ensure its preservation and reduce existing tensions.

We hope that the parties will, in turn, refrain from taking any action that might further undermine the JCPOA. Failure to do so would have detrimental effects on non-proliferation, security and stability in the region, as it is the only mechanism to guarantee the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. While addressing and resolving these aspects is the responsibility of the States of the region, the collaboration and assistance of the international community, the United Nations and regional organizations is paramount. In this respect, we must use all the tools at our

disposal, including Mr. Naumkin's suggestion on bilateral dialogue in the absence of relations between two nations.

The countries of the Gulf possess great natural and cultural resources and human qualities, so they hold the key to achieving a peace that will enable them to provide their inhabitants with a dignified and prosperous life and to become in turn agents of change for those countries that find themselves in situations of acute conflict. Confidence-building and dialogue leading to the cessation of hostilities and the strengthening and normalization of ties of cooperation and good-neighbourliness must be the gateway to the promotion of joint mechanisms for addressing common problems and challenges. We advocate a peace without discrimination that extends to all corners of the Middle East and offers development opportunities to all its inhabitants.

Finally, we call for a coronavirus vaccine and other health technologies needed to address the disease, which must be made equitably accessible and with their worldwide distribution being ensured. To this end, the role of the World Health Organization, donor countries and the private sector is essential to achieving this goal, based on cooperation, solidarity and justice.

**Annex 11****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I thank the Russian Federation for organizing today's debate, which has brought together the Security Council and some regional actors to discuss the situation in the Gulf. I highly appreciate the Secretary-General's briefing, as well as those made by Mr. Robert Malley and Mr. Vitaly Naumkin.

The security of the Gulf region is instrumental to the security of the entire Middle East, from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. We cannot talk about security in the Gulf without mentioning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has been at the root of a multitude of tensions in the region.

I am glad to say that some of those tensions were eased by the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Bahrain normalizing relations with Israel. That is a positive step towards achieving peace and stability in the Gulf. We acknowledge the constructive role that the United States played in this regard.

We encourage regional actors to embrace this spirit of compromise and continue to implement confidence-building measures that would contribute to the long-term stability of the region. However, one must not forget that the foundation for the settlement of conflicts is international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions, to which all parties must adhere.

The current regional conflicts, such as the ones in Syria and Yemen, are not a consequence of cultural factors. Consolidation of regional relations around the idea of eliminating terrorism is fruitless. Estonia believes that religious extremism does not represent the Arab world or Muslim communities. Instead, regional conflicts and the instability they cause are a result of denying individual freedoms and carrying out expansionist foreign policies. Saddam Hussein's internal terror, crimes against the Kurds and attack on Kuwait in 1990 are examples par excellence. Unfortunately, such suppressive politics continue; only the aggressor has changed. The recently published *Arab Opinion Index* revealed that every second Iraqi and every third Saudi finds Teheran's actions to be the most threatening to their security. There is no surprise there; Iran has hijacked oil tankers, sent arms to radical groups and financed militants across the region. These acts have increased regional insecurity and made it difficult to justify the expiry of the Iran arms embargo.

Still, the Security Council and the European Union put its faith in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Iran's commitment not to develop a nuclear weapon. Estonia believes that the fulfilment of all nuclear-related commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the JCPOA, remain a fundamental precondition for regional and international peace and security.

There is a need for a systematic approach to establishing a security system in the Gulf. This includes stopping the wars in Yemen and Syria, supporting Iraq in its recovery from violence by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, encouraging Israel and Palestine to start direct negotiations, and ending the blockade of Qatar with a political compromise.

The initiatives to ensure security and stability of the entire Middle East must come from the region itself. We believe that only a broader regional security dialogue among the countries of the region can lead to a long-term solution. This will enable the full potential of the societies in the region, which are aspiring to touch the stars — and I mean that literally, as we recently witnessed the United Arab Emirates launching its first-ever space mission to Mars earlier this year.

**Annex 12****Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

I thank Russia for having organized this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and the speakers for their presentations, and the countries of the region and the regional organizations present for their participation.

This debate is important because the risk of destabilization in the region is real, given the many challenges that the region is facing — security challenges with a risk of nuclear proliferation, the illegal acquisition and transfer of arms, terrorism and several conflicts at the very gates of the Gulf, which are sometimes the scene of rivalry between Powers from the region and elsewhere.

There are political challenges as well, with the peoples of the region, particularly young people and women, aspiring to peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic and social well-being, which insecurity, the coronavirus disease and climate change are putting to the test. In the face of those challenges, it is necessary to work to stabilize the regional situation by rejecting polarization and to work together to build the regional security architecture of tomorrow. To do so, international law and commitments must first be respected. I would like to stress two points in that regard.

First, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and resolution 2231 (2015) have provided a concrete and effective solution to the Iranian nuclear-proliferation crisis. France welcomes the fact that the Council almost unanimously reaffirmed its support for the JCPOA in August and September. Resolution 2231 (2015) must be fully implemented by everyone. Iran must therefore put an immediate end to the violations of its nuclear commitments and take no further measures that would aggravate the nuclear situation. Similarly, restrictions on the development of missiles that are nuclear-weapon delivery systems must be respected.

Secondly, I would like to recall that the expiry of the conventional arms embargo does not in any way mean that all restrictions on the supply, transfer or purchase of arms to or from Iran are now completely lifted. Certain restrictive measures, starting with the European arms embargo and the planned restrictions on missile transfers, will be maintained in accordance with the JCPOA and remain in force until October 2023. We will ensure that those provisions are strictly respected. We also call on all participants in the JCPOA, as well as possible suppliers and recipients from Iran, to exercise the utmost restraint and responsibility in considering the consequences that possible transfers could have for regional security and stability, and to draw the necessary conclusions.

The Security Council has also strictly controlled arms and missile transfers in the region to non-State actors in Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon and has adopted other general restrictions on such transfers in the framework of resolution 1540 (2004). Those regimes must be fully respected. Their violation, in particular by Iran, has been widely documented, including in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2020/531).

Together with our E3 partners, Germany and the United Kingdom, we also strongly condemned, just over a year ago, the attacks on the facilities of Saudi Aramco, for which Iranian responsibility was established. All of those violations and actions are unacceptable. They must stop, and we must collectively consider how to stop them. Regional security and the authority of Security Council decisions are at stake. We are continuing our efforts in that regard to identify concrete and ambitious solutions to meet the challenges posed by the lifting of the United Nations embargo.

In order to work to de-escalate tensions, a framework for structured dialogue could make it possible to break the spiral of mistrust that threatens the security and stability of the region. It could help develop regional and bilateral initiatives on transparency and confidence-building measures. The Secretary-General can legitimately organize this regional dialogue and propose options for moving forward towards the establishment of a security architecture in the region.

Along with its European partners, France is already involved in this collective undertaking. Almost a year ago we launched the European initiative for maritime surveillance in the Strait of Hormuz, and we will continue, on that basis, again with our European partners at the forefront, to support the regional dialogue for stability in the Gulf.

Working for security in the Gulf requires a commitment in good faith by all regional and international players to resolve the crises on its doorstep, which often reflect or even deepen regional tensions. Putting an end to the war in Yemen would first and foremost lead to finally putting an end to the suffering of the Yemeni population and would also help to set in motion a positive dynamic in the region. We call on the parties to cease hostilities and to engage in good faith in the talks led by Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to reach a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement under the auspices of the United Nations. Peace in Yemen is possible. If all the countries gathered here today work together, it can become a reality.

International cooperation is precisely what made it possible to defeat Da'esh militarily in Iraq and Syria, in support of the Iraqi authorities and the Syrian Democratic Forces. The fight must continue, because the terrorist threat persists and in some places is becoming increasingly present once again. Iraq must now also be supported in its efforts to achieve stability, development and reform. It is that support that my authorities expressed yesterday to the Iraqi Prime Minister during his visit to France and which must be shared by all players, first and foremost by Iraq's neighbours. It is essential to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis that complies with the parameters of resolution 2254 (2015) and is fully inclusive. Faced with the humanitarian catastrophe that has characterized that conflict for the past 10 years, Russia and Iran have a responsibility to put pressure on the Syrian regime to take this path.

Finally, I would like to say a word about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is undermining regional stability. France welcomes the normalization of relations between Israel and two Gulf countries, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. We welcome its contribution to Israel's security and to peace and security in the region. But we hope that it will also contribute equally to the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, with a view to implementing the two-State solution and Israel's definitive renunciation of its plans to annex all or part of the West Bank.

The task is immense, but it is essential. It will have to be carried out gradually because confidence is built step by step on the basis of deeds. The Council can count on the commitment of France and its European partners to contribute to it.

**Annex 13****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Christoph Heusgen**

I would like to thank all the other briefers, especially Bob Malley of the International Crisis Group. I want to echo his appeal to China to liberate Michael Kovrig. He is not only a member of the International Crisis Group but a former colleague of ours, a former diplomat.

On the subject, I do not need to repeat the description of the situation, all the tensions and divergences, the divisions, the shrinking democratic space and details of the suffering of the people, in particular in Yemen. Germany's response to all those challenges will not surprise anyone, and it is very much along the same lines as we just heard from our Estonian colleague. The framework for peace and security in the region already exists: it is international law; it is international humanitarian law; it is human rights law. Unfortunately, international law is violated every day in the region.

We have spoken about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and resolution 2231 (2015). Other Security Council resolutions in the wider Middle East are not adhered to, from the resolutions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to those concerning sanctions on Libya. International humanitarian law is violated every day. We see it in our regular briefings on Yemen. It is totally unacceptable in view of the victims of the conflict among the civilian population. Human rights are violated every day in many countries in the region. Particularly in Iran, civilian and political rights are violated every day. The prisons in Iran are the most abhorrent in the whole region, similar to what we witness in Syria. Religious minorities such as the Baha'i are persecuted. On international law, even today Iran is still calling for the destruction of Israel, and this is just unacceptable.

Germany can only urge and continues to urge adherence to international law, the JCPOA and other international agreements. I would like to pick up on Bob Malley's proposal that we have to start with small steps of confidence-building measures and prevent unintended and accidental incidents. We also would need some steps to overcome the divergences in the Gulf Cooperation Council. In that context, I would also like to pay tribute to the late Amir of Kuwait, who did a lot to that effect. I can only encourage Kuwait to continue its good offices.

If confidence-building measures succeed, they should be developed into a more comprehensive and cooperative approach to promote collective security and sustainable stability in the region. We encourage the Secretary-General to take initiatives. In his statement, he expressed his readiness to do so, and we should all support him. This was already stated, and some mentioned, resolution 598 (1987). It was a time when West Germany was also sitting in the Security Council.

Germany stands ready to help. We provide support in particular through humanitarian aid. We also support political processes. We have been doing this in Libya with the Berlin Conference. We have announced that early next year we will have a conference on Yemen in the Permanent Five plus three format, and we stand ready to provide support. The solution to all these problems is respect for international law.



**Annex 14****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

We thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's important meeting on the situation in the Persian Gulf.

As we discuss this important issue, we deem it pertinent, like other speakers, to pay tribute to His late Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, who was a beacon of peace and diplomacy.

We appreciate the extensive briefing provided by the Secretary-General, as well as the information shared by Mr. Malley and Mr. Naumkin.

Indonesia shares the concerns regarding the growing tensions in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, the increased risk of conflict in the area is troubling. I believe that everyone would agree that neither the region nor the international community can afford to deal with the consequences should the crisis further escalate. The scenario would be too grim.

With that in mind, I wish to highlight some key elements that my delegation considers crucial in addressing the current issues as well as in ensuring long-term stability and security in the Persian Gulf.

The first element is a coordinated approach to conflict prevention and mediation. It is evident that, besides the commitment of the regional actors to averting any escalation, an integrated approach to prevention on the part of the United Nations and the international community is also significant. Dialogue and mediation must always be encouraged when tensions arise. Diplomacy must be at the forefront, with the aim at achieving concrete solutions that would lead to regional stabilization. That is not easy, obviously; however, it is possible.

In that context, Indonesia believes that it is essential for all parties to continue supporting the full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and resolution 2231 (2015). The JCPOA, endorsed by resolution 2231 (2015), remains vital and relevant to the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture as well as to regional and international security. My delegation therefore calls on all JCPOA participants to fulfil their obligations completely and effectively, and to resolve all differences constructively within the JCPOA dispute resolution mechanism.

Secondly, comprehensive measures are needed in addressing the political and socioeconomic issues in the region. We are all aware that tensions in the Persian Gulf are interrelated with the overall situation in the Middle East. It is crucial that the long-standing conflicts in the region, such as in Syria and Yemen, as well as the plea of the Palestinian people for their freedom, always be highlighted in our related discussions. It is of paramount importance to continue our efforts to reach a sustainable political settlement in this area. In addition, it is imperative to address mistrust and enhance confidence-building among the key players.

We cannot resolve the security issues facing the Gulf region and the Middle East by using inflammatory rhetoric or accusations that are damaging to the prospects for peace. Again, we should not give up on dialogue and diplomacy.

Specifically on the question of Palestine, Indonesia remains committed to extending unequivocal solidarity and support to the Palestinian people so that it can gain its rights, including the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, within the pre-1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We therefore should welcome and show our support for President Abbas's call at the high-level debate last month (see A/75/PV.10) for the Secretary-General to commence, together with the Quartet and the Security Council, an international conference with all the parties concerned to engage in a peace process, based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and other internationally agreed parameters. It remains the obligation of the Council to safeguard the two-State vision for the sake of the Palestinian people and for that of the stability of the region and beyond.

My last point is on respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity as the foundation of all efforts to create and maintain stability in the region. We agree that, in order to achieve a sustainable recovery of the situation in the Gulf, collective measures are paramount and must be based on firm respect for sovereignty. Neither can we forget the necessity of abiding by the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law as well as of the faithful implementation of all Security Council resolutions. A resolution, if not implemented, remains just a piece of paper.

My delegation cannot offer a perfect scenario in addressing the complexity of issues in this region. However, Indonesia wishes to encourage all the relevant parties to give peace a real chance, based on good faith, that would lead to a sustained stability that leaves no room for tensions. We must put aside any potential steps towards politicization, which would only cause the people more suffering.

Finding the path to peace is not difficult. When there is a will, there is a way. The challenge is whether we will take that path alone or together, and whether we will take it with each other or against each other. The options are clear, and our decision must be clear as well. Again, let us give peace a real chance.

**Annex 15****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

We applaud the Russian Federation for convening this very timely and important discussion. We also thank all our briefers for their presentations this morning.

Conflicts in the Middle East, by their nature, have a spillover destabilizing effect on the Gulf region. Inversely, the political and security dynamics across the Persian Gulf hold significant implications for regional and international peace and security. The Security Council carries on its shoulders the burden of not only unresolved, decades-long complex conflicts, but also emerging tensions.

Political instabilities in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya have been a breeding ground for terrorist activities. We condemn the atrocious crimes committed by terrorist groups and their affiliates across the region.

The Palestinian plight remains a central component as a destabilizing factor in the Middle East. We remain committed to the international community's long-standing, principled support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, and for the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital. We implore the State of Israel to adhere to international law and the provisions of all relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). Also echoing President Abbas's call for an international conference on the Middle East in early 2021, we believe that such a conference can bring all parties together to discuss the negative trends on the ground that are imperilling the two-State solution and stability in the region.

The only sustainable way forward for the region is through an urgent de-escalation of tensions and high-alert postures. That necessary action can only materialize if all regional and concerned international Powers refrain from aggressive rhetoric and unnecessary unilateral action. Peaceful strategies, such as mediation and negotiation, should take precedence over any form of militarism. We implore all parties to let good judgment prevail and allow for diplomatic efforts and confidence-building measures to take place. While we praise any initiative for peace in the region, we believe that such initiatives should be inclusive of all parties.

In Yemen, for instance, we firmly believe in the need for an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process. That also applies to the situations in Iraq, Libya and Syria, which demand inclusion for reconciliation and reconstruction. Likewise, we must all recommit to ending impunity, which has an adverse impact on reconciliation processes.

We reaffirm our support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Its preservation is critical to peace and stability in the region, and we urge all parties to commit to multilateral processes and refrain from actions that run contrary to the goals of resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA. Multilateralism remains the most effective approach to solving complex issues. We therefore encourage the United States to rejoin that critical agreement.

A practical approach would enable us to jointly address common threats, such as the pandemic, terrorism and climate change, and simultaneously reinforce existing partnerships and forge new ones. We certainly see hope in setting aside political differences, de-escalating tensions, engaging in diplomatic dialogue and refraining from interfering in the domestic affairs of States. Through collaborative and consolidated action, we can achieve peace and prosperity in the wider region.

**Annex 16****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, allow me to convey my sincere thanks, through Mr. Sergei Lavrov, to the Russian Federation for convening this important meeting. I should also like to convey our utmost gratitude to the Secretary-General for his valuable efforts to promote security and peace in the exceptional and difficult circumstances that the world is currently undergoing. I should also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General's initiative, the role of the United Nations and multilateral action.

The Middle East region has taken on extreme geostrategic importance at both the regional and international levels owing to its political and economic heft. That is not to mention its historical cultural importance and its moral and symbolic place in the world. For decades, the region has been feeling the effects of crises — both longstanding and recent — whose implications for security and stability and whose impacts on relations among the region's countries are ongoing. Tension and strife have been the region's hallmarks. That makes us vulnerable to flareups of existing conflicts and outbreaks of new conflicts, especially when the logic of arms prevails over the choice for dialogue.

In that connection, I should like to point out that the restoration of security and stability to the region cannot be treated in isolation from the overall situation in the Middle East, and above all the continuing Israeli occupation of Arab territory and the prolongation of the Palestinian problem with no solution in sight, with its various regional and international dimensions and implications. In our view, it is impossible for the region to regain its security and stability in the absence of a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem based on United Nations resolutions, the internationally agreed terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and the two-State solution. We must also push ahead with solutions to other regional conflicts and crises, particularly in Syria and Yemen.

At the same time, addressing regional security must go beyond the purely local dimension to include the regional and international dimensions. All these factors intersect and interrelate. It is therefore necessary to address them through a comprehensive approach that spans the sphere of security, politics and economics, and takes into account regional particularities and the priorities, interests and concerns of the various parties involved. That would help to find common ground for constructive dialogue to minimize tensions, build trust, ease concerns, manage crises, prevent the outbreak of new conflicts and avoid fuelling those that already exist.

The tension and sectarian polarization rampant in the region only serve to undermine the settlement of existing crises and conflicts and exacerbate the many cross-border challenges and threats faced by the countries of the region, including terrorism, piracy, threats to maritime navigation and energy supplies, and the coronavirus disease pandemic, all of which demand a reformulation of cooperation and collective action.

Tunisia remains committed to international legitimacy and the Charter of the United Nations, and wishes only to serve the interests of international peace and security. It therefore stresses the need to promote collective security and constructive cooperation, and calls for the resolution of conflicts by means of dialogue and peaceful means, while avoiding escalation. We must focus on factors conducive to security and stability. That means resolving existing conflicts, standing up to terrorist organizations, preventing the development or use of weapons of mass destruction,

respecting the sovereignty of States, refraining from intervention in their internal affairs, eschewing the threat or use of force, and building a consensus that enshrines peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, good-neighbourliness, compliance with international law and the implementation of United Nations resolutions.

Reaching that stage and achieving those goals demands first and foremost that we promote a climate of trust and preventive diplomacy. All parties at the regional and international levels must shoulder their responsibilities and fulfil their commitments, especially when it comes to resolving ongoing issues and conflicts and eliminating causes of tension and threats to security and stability.

**Annex 17****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

I want to start by thanking the Russian presidency for holding this debate. The issue under consideration today is one of great importance. As I start, let me just also say, in response to Robert Malley, that I want to echo my German colleague on the case of Michael Kovrig, which causes us deep concern.

The United Kingdom remains concerned by the trajectory of violence, instability and hostile State activity in the Middle East and the Gulf region. Heightened tensions and insecurity serve no one's long-term interest and instead put all at risk. We continue to call for de-escalation, dialogue and peace. The world cannot afford another conflict in the region.

As we have repeatedly said in the Chamber, our commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains resolute, and it is at the forefront of our policy to support regional stability. Iranian nuclear armament would have catastrophic implications for the security of the region and beyond, and the JCPOA is the only vehicle currently available to prevent that. Nevertheless, while we remain committed to the nuclear deal, systematic Iranian non-compliance with its JCPOA commitments is putting it at risk. Iran must engage constructively with the Dispute Resolution Mechanism and it must implement its commitments under the deal. That is critical to security across the Middle East.

We have also frequently expressed our concern about Iran's wider activity in the region. Iran has consistently carried out arms transfers to regional non-State actors in violation of Security Council resolutions. There can be no doubt that such proliferation destabilizes the region and escalates already high tensions. That is why we regret the expiry of the conventional arms restrictions provided for under resolution 2231 (2015). We will therefore continue to build our security cooperation with allies and partners and work to find a sustainable solution to Iranian proliferation. And we will redouble our efforts to ensure the implementation of other Security Council resolutions that prohibit arms transfers to regional non-State actors, including resolution 1546 (2004), on Iraq, resolution 1701 (2006), on Lebanon and resolution 2216 (2015), on Yemen. We will also ensure that the remaining provisions of resolution 2231 (2015), in particular the restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile programme, are rigorously enforced.

For too long the region has been scarred by terrorism, war and other conflict. However, although instability has increased, we must not lose hope. We therefore welcome the announcements of normalization between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, and we welcome the suspension of Israeli annexation plans. They must stay that way. The Abraham accords demonstrate the potential for and the power of Jewish and Arab peoples in the region, breaking with the resentment and enmity of the past. Nelson Mandela once said: "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies". The antidote to resentment and enmity is reconciliation, and, as Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said, we hope that other States will follow the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain's example and thereby secure a more peaceful Middle East. We must therefore build on the momentum of the Abraham accords in order to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which remains a wellspring of tension across the region. There is ultimately no substitute for direct talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians towards the ultimate objective of a two-State solution. As with many of the region's conflicts, mistrust can be countered only by measures to rebuild confidence and facilitate dialogue.

Conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Iraq continue to be sources of instability in the region. On Syria, the United Kingdom continues to support an inclusive Syrian-led political process, as provided for in resolution 2254 (2015). Following the latest Constitutional Committee talks, we again implore all parties to engage properly with the process. A political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis. We fully support the peace process led by the United Nations Special Envoy, and we urge all parties, particularly the Yemeni parties, to engage constructively.

We remain committed to supporting a peaceful and prosperous Iraq, able to promote stability in the region. We are proud to work with Iraq within the Global Coalition against Da'esh — a clear example of shared cooperation, effectively addressing one of the region's biggest security concerns.

We welcome the Secretary-General's participation in this debate and the role of the United Nations working to resolve each of the aforementioned conflicts and sources of tension in the region. The Secretary-General can continue to rely on the United Kingdom's full support in each theatre.

However, as the concept note (S/2020/1013) for today's debate suggests, there is a need to look beyond the current crises and to engage on wider issues. In the longer term, that will require a process within the region, which includes confidence-building measures leading to a wider dialogue. The United Nations has a potential role to play as a trusted mediator and, indeed, paragraph 8 of resolution 598 (1987) makes provision for the Secretary-General to examine, with States of the region, measures to enhance regional security and stability. While we hope that today's debate is a step in the right direction, we must be honest that an open debate in the Security Council, however well intentioned, is not the forum for such conversations. Progress can ultimately be made only through candid conversations among all the parties.

We are also not convinced that launching into security-focused working groups will result in meaningful dialogue. We must remain realistic about the current level of regional mistrust. The issues involved are complex and sensitive and an incremental approach is needed to build confidence and cooperation. More critically, as Russia points out, any dialogue needs to be shaped by regional participants. I want to welcome the commitment to regional security expressed by Iran in its letter of 15 October addressed to the Security Council covering the Hormuz Peace Endeavour. But, as a party to conflicts across the region, Iran is not an impartial actor, and it would not be appropriate for any initiative to be Iranian-led. More consultation is needed within the region to avoid another failed regional security initiative. We should learn from the many failed attempts in order to make a future initiative a success. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which led to the 1975 Helsinki Accords, provides both positive and negative lessons, on which we can draw.

In conclusion, it is vital that we hear from all regional States, and we would welcome discussions beyond the Council that could help to identify political and practical steps to reduce mistrust within the region. Such discussions could include a potential mediation role for the United Nations. As I said at the outset, tensions and insecurity in the region ultimately serve none.

I again thank the Russian Federation for organizing this debate on such an important issue.



**Annex 18****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank you, Mr. Minister, for convening this meeting on Persian Gulf security. The topic of this discussion comes at a historic time for the United States. In recent months, we worked with our partners in the region to broker the Abraham accords, first between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and then between Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Those normalization agreements lay the foundation for diplomatic relations and the beginning of cooperation across a broad range of fields, including education, health care, trade and security.

The Abraham accords underscore President Trump's vision for peace and what has long been the reality on the ground in the Middle East: that the United States is at the forefront of efforts to address ongoing conflicts in the region and promote peace. Our presence has a stabilizing effect and the partnerships that we have built over the many years provide a foundation for meaningful engagement and constructive cooperation.

The Trump Administration has also proposed the equally historic vision for peace. What makes this plan so different from past efforts is that it can be realistically implemented. To date, it is the most serious and detailed plan ever presented to secure peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

While we understand that the Palestinians may not like every aspect of the plan, it offers a legitimate starting point for negotiations, and we hope that they will take advantage of this opportunity. I look forward to a time soon when the Israelis and Palestinians will resume direct negotiations to reach a peaceful resolution of their conflict, and we need to see an end to outside interference, including the extremist political activities of bad actors in the Persian Gulf.

The fact is that the Trump Administration has brought fresh thinking and a new approach to the Middle East, and it is paying off. The Abraham accords and the vision for peace represent what is possible in the region under bold American leadership. The root of this success lies in our efforts to rebuild trust and restore credibility with our partners in the region. Adopting the right strategy on Iran has been an important part of these efforts.

The United States recognizes that Iran is the single greatest threat to peace and security in the Middle East. We know that when nations stand together and confront Iran, the world is a safer place. Today, we are confronting the full range of Iran's destabilizing activities, from its support of terrorist groups and proxies, to its development of ballistic missiles in defiance of the Security Council.

I understand that my Russian colleagues have proposed creating a Persian Gulf security construct to promote stability in the region. Respectfully, I think that the solution is much easier. The Council must simply muster the courage to hold Iran accountable to its existing international obligations. And it is a fact that Iran is neither abiding by the letter nor the spirit of the Council's decisions.

In Yemen, Iran continues to support the Houthi rebels who have plunged that country into a bloody civil war, now in its sixth year. This conflict has brought destitution, destruction and untold suffering to the Yemeni people. Many now struggle to buy food and meet other basic needs. Instead of supporting peace efforts to end the conflict, Iran has continually sent the Houthis weapons to fuel the war, in violation of the arms embargo in resolution 2216 (2015).

In Syria, the Al-Assad regime continues to give Iran and its military proxies safe harbour to extend their terror campaign and project its military power deeper into the Middle East, threatening the lives of the Syrian people, but also the security of Israel. Iranian forces must withdraw from Syria for there to be lasting peace. Only the United Nations-facilitated political solution outlined in resolution 2254 (2015) will pave the way for Syria at peace with its people and the region.

In Lebanon, Iran continues to arm Hizbullah in blatant violation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004), most notably the arms embargo that the Council reaffirmed less than two months ago. Month after month, some in the Council today turn a blind eye as Iran channels sophisticated weapons and money into Lebanon, ensuring that there can never be peace. The Council must do more to address both the incomplete implementation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) and Hizbullah's illicit activities.

In Iraq, Iran continues to support local militias, in violation of Iraq's sovereignty and resolution 2522 (2020). These militias are responsible for targeting and murdering peaceful Iraqi protestors, civil society activists and members of the media. Iranian-backed militias continue to target the United States and other diplomatic facilities, placing American diplomats and Iraqi civilians in harm and jeopardizing the ability of the United States to fully assist the Iraqi Government and people.

As long as Iran and others support the terrorist activities of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, our sincere efforts to help Israelis and Palestinians reach peace and build a better future together will be threatened by terror and mired in meaningless and perpetual violence and conflict. These are the facts. If we intend for this to be a meaningful and constructive conversation about insecurity in the region, then we must openly acknowledge the main driver of its insecurity — Iran.

Just imagine how much safer the Middle East would be today if Iran abided by existing Security Council resolutions. Just imagine if countries in the region were able to grow, prosper and develop without the looming threat of Iranian drone or missile attacks or the constant fear that Iran may sabotage international shipping lanes. Just imagine if the Council would simply muster the courage to hold Iran accountable.

I appreciate the focus Russia has placed today on Gulf security, but, respectfully, I disagree with the solution that Foreign Minister Lavrov has proposed. The international community does not need yet another mechanism to promote Gulf security. The Security Council has all the tools at its disposal to hold Iran accountable; we must simply decide to do so.

The United States will continue to hold Iran accountable, even if it means we must act alone. As I said in Washington on September 21 when the United States took decisive action to snap back previously lifted sanctions on Iran and restore arms restrictions after this body failed to extend the 13-year arms embargo, what makes America special is that we are unafraid to stand up for what is right. And I do not need a cheering section to validate my moral compass.

While we will continue our maximum pressure campaign to deny the regime the means to continue fuelling terror, we stand ready to meet Iran at the negotiating table to conclude a comprehensive deal, as Secretary Pompeo has outlined.

As I close, I want to remind Council members that, at the beginning of this Administration, President Trump promised that he would strengthen America's friendships and build new partnerships in pursuit of peace. He has kept his promise. The United States is a force for good in the Middle East and around the world, and

the successes that we have helped bring about recently open new possibilities for peace and prosperity, which are long overdue.

Members of the Council must recognize that these milestones would not have been possible without the efforts that the United States and others have made to contain Iran. We call upon this body to take every action consistent with its mandate and hold Iran accountable for its actions without delay.

**Annex 19****Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, M. Javad Zarif**

Allow me to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting, and thank Russia for its constructive initiatives. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the initiative by my friend, State Councillor Wang Yi.

A year ago, I participated in a similar meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.8626), presided by you, Minister Lavrov, to present the Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE) that had just been launched by President Rouhani in his address to the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.5). Iran stands by that initiative, which is the culmination of various Iranian proposals for security and confidence-building in the Persian Gulf region.

Our first proposal in 1985 became the foundation of paragraphs 5 and 8 of resolution 598 (1987), which read:

“5. Calls upon all other States to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any act which may lead to further escalation and widening of the conflict and thus to facilitate the implementation of the present resolution;

...

“8. Further requests the Secretary-General to examine, in consultation with Iran and Iraq and with other States of the region, measures to enhance the security and stability of the region;”

Regrettably — and despite our persistent follow-ups — those paragraphs remain unimplemented. And our region has since been the scene of several wars, massive foreign military build-up, an ensuing nightmare of extremism and terrorism, a dangerous accumulation of the most sophisticated weaponry, and aggression and power projection by various actors.

The disparities in power, geographic size and natural and human resources are very real. Historical anxieties and rivalries among many regional countries cannot be overlooked. But three flawed prescriptions have caused catastrophic consequences: first, that security can be bought from others — be it from Saddam Hussein, who invaded Iran on some of our neighbours’ behalf, from the United States, which came to rescue our neighbours from the monster that they had created together, or through the unprecedented purchase of military hardware; secondly, that one can have security at the expense of the insecurity of one’s neighbours, be it Iran, Kuwait or Qatar at one time or another; and thirdly, that regional hegemony can be established, be it in Yemen, North Africa or the Horn of Africa.

Extraregional actors have looked at our regional disparities, unending rivalries and new hegemonic illusions as opportunities to expand their military presence and to sell more weapons. The United States has deployed nearly 50,000 troops in the Persian Gulf region in 29 military installations with more than 300 combat aircraft. It has at least one aircraft carrier patrolling our waters at any given time, as well as tens of destroyers and other vessels with four Central Command headquarters for its Army, Special Forces, Air Force and Navy. And, from 2014 to 2018, the Persian Gulf States accounted for nearly one quarter of global arms imports, almost double compared to the preceding five years. Unsurprisingly, the United States sold most of those lethal armaments. Yet, the military build-up and hundreds of billions of dollars of arms sales have enhanced neither the security of the external powers, nor of the region.

Let me take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the overwhelming majority of Security Council members for rejecting the United States' efforts to kill the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and resolution 2231 (2015). Iran does not intend to engage in an arms race in the region or start a buying spree, in spite of the end of Security Council restrictions.

For too long, foreign forces have come to our region to project their power, not to protect our people. The illegitimate United States presence — 7,600 miles from its shores — culminated in the cowardly assassination by President Trump of General Qasem Soleimani, Da'esh's enemy number 1.

Security is contingent on a reliance on our own peoples and cooperation with our own neighbours. Yes, with money one can buy the most sophisticated weaponry. But the truth is that security and stability can never be bought. We need collective efforts by regional countries to establish inclusive dialogue and security networking in this region. Otherwise, we will all be engulfed in turmoil for generations to come, and our turmoil will be everyone's turmoil.

We need a fundamental paradigm shift in our region. We need a strong region that precludes hegemonic illusions by any Power — regional or global — a strong region that ensures homegrown political and territorial stability. And a strong region in which all neighbours exercise strategic self-restraint.

Our Hormuz Peace Endeavour is founded on these imperatives. HOPE also rests on the responsibility of every State in the region to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in our neighbourhood and to benefit from it.

HOPE is founded on a commitment by all littoral States to promoting mutual understanding, peaceful and friendly relations, and cooperation among all States and peoples of the Persian Gulf region; ensuring the territorial integrity and inviolability of international boundaries of all Persian Gulf littoral States; cooperating in eradicating terrorism, extremism and sectarian tensions across the region; promoting the peaceful resolution of all regional tensions and conflicts through enhanced communication and early warning; and ensuring the freedom of navigation and energy security for all.

To achieve these objectives, we propose adherence to common principles, such as dialogue and mutual respect; equal footing; respect for each other's sovereignty; refraining from the threat or use of force; non-aggression and non-intervention in the internal affairs of each other; and refraining from participation in alliances and coalitions against one another.

We believe that a new regional approach should be the outcome of collective deliberations. Last year, President Rouhani shared our initial thoughts with all the leaders of the littoral States of the Persian Gulf, inviting them to enrich these ideas and participate in their implementation. Together we can envisage a broad spectrum of cooperation and confidence-building measures that include water management, environmental protection, nuclear safety, energy security, education, tourism, economic cooperation, trade, investment, poverty eradication and people's empowerment. We can agree on regional early warning systems and military contacts among Persian Gulf littoral States. We can agree to establish joint task forces regarding practical measures to gradually expand cooperation.

We know that most of our neighbours prefer peace and dialogue. That cannot be achieved if one or two pursue confrontation and wishfully wait for alien vampires to "cut their neighbour's head". That delusion will never be realized.

We all have anxieties and grievances. Certainly, Iranians will never forget the eight years of imposed war, the aggressor of which was fully financed by our

neighbours. So, we can choose to remain prisoners of the past and perpetuate instability and tension. Or, all of us — and I stress all — can choose peace, security, stability and prosperity for all. The choice, surely, should be obvious to everyone.

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi**

My delegation did not intend to ask for the floor again. However, since some baseless allegations have been made against my country this morning, which I categorically reject, I have no choice but to respond.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has played an incontestable role in ensuring energy security, commercial navigation and stability in the Persian Gulf region, and we will continue to contribute to the promotion of peace and security in this sensitive region.

Iran's defensive requirements, including its missile programme, stem from geostrategic calculations and a significant historical experience. During Saddam Hussein's eight-year aggression against Iran, which was supported through different means by the United States and a number of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, our cities were showered by Iraqi missiles and our people fell victim to chemical and other lethal weapons provided to Saddam mainly by the West. Simultaneously, unjust sanctions and restrictions deprived us of rudimentary means of self-defence. It is our responsibility now to prevent the recurrence of such an appalling situation.

It should be borne in mind that security must originate from within and cannot be purchased from outside. Those in our region who spend hundreds of billions of dollars on sophisticated armaments annually should realize that huge military expenditures neither create legitimacy nor long-lasting security. They have only turned our region into a powder keg. And the only beneficiaries are the exporters of these deadly weapons. Some GCC forces are using these sophisticated armaments against the innocent people of Yemen, who are experiencing the worst man-made humanitarian catastrophe in contemporary history — a clear case of a war crime.

There is a long list of internationally wrongful acts attributable to those who make unsubstantiated accusations against Iran. Nonetheless, we are not here to delve into the past. Our first and foremost priority should be to build mutual trust and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and no interference in their internal affairs, and to promote cooperation on an equal footing in order to create a better and safer region.

Since the issue related to some Iranian islands has been mentioned here, I have to say that the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb have always been part of Iran. These islands are Iranian and will remain so.

Let me conclude by once again reiterating our call for a constructive dialogue with our neighbours with a view to dispelling misunderstandings and restoring friendly relations among all littoral States of the Persian Gulf.

**Annex 20****Statement by the Head of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences of Iraq, Ahmed Barwari**

[Original: Arabic]

I am delivering this statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Fuad Hussein, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq.

Iraq congratulates the delegation of the Russian Federation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month and wishes it every success. It also thanks the Russian Federation for its good-faith efforts to find common ground and reach understandings on the sensitive situation in the Gulf region.

Iraq takes this important occasion to reiterate its deep commitment to the basic rules that govern international relations and its unshakeable faith in the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, which include respect for the independence, territorial integrity and sovereign equality of countries; non-interference in internal affairs; good-neighbourliness; the peaceful settlement of conflicts; refraining from the threat or use of force; and the elimination of security threats through cooperation, all in the service of the higher interests of the peoples of the world.

The fight waged by Iraq against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist entity from 2014 until victory was declared in 2017 has been one of the positive developments in the region. It constituted a practical application of an important principle of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, international cooperation to deter threats to international peace and security. Victory was achieved through the blood and sacrifice of all the various branches of our security forces, with the support of the Iraqi people and the assistance of the international coalition and all our friends, brothers and neighbours. Iraq has become a crossroads for all those with a stake in eradicating this threat to international peace and security. All our friends and brothers agreed to commit themselves to implementing the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations by supporting Iraq in fighting terrorism, restoring security and stability, and starting to rebuild what the ISIL terrorist gangs destroyed.

Ever since 2003, Iraq has been working to repair the great rift in its relations with its geographic neighbours caused by the former regime. We have adopted a policy of dialogue, reconciliation and the gradual resolution of problems. Iraqi relations with both the sister State of Kuwait and the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran have been a major bright spot in the northern Gulf region.

I should also like to note that currently, one of the most important priorities of Iraqi foreign policy is to expand cooperation with the Gulf States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to create a broad and common Gulf arena. The current policy of Iraq is based on the principle of dialogue, communication and building good and balanced relations to solve all outstanding problems. It steers clear of the use of force, which only blocks solutions and threatens regional security.

To some, it appears that the Gulf region is suffering from security problems that are insurmountable. But the options for building security and establishing stability seem realistic if we adopt practical approaches to resolving problems instead of kicking them down the road and neglecting to manage conflicts. Iraq is receptive to all initiatives conducive to establishing security and stability in the Gulf.

That is why Iraq calls for the adoption of a realistic perspective that regards the security of the Gulf as the responsibility of all the States that line its shores. At the same time, we urge all States of the region to cooperate with one another



in earnest. A lack of dialogue and the hurling of accusations are not in anyone's interest. After all, there have been dialogues among the Gulf States in the past. There should be no hostilities whatsoever between the States and peoples of the region, who all must occupy the same geographic space. Ultimately, we have no choice but to come up with a formula for mutual understanding and dialogue among the region's States. We believe that it is necessary at a minimum for any initiative or security proposal to exclude no one, so that all States can engage with proposals put forward by any of them. We again affirm that Iraq will adhere to neutrality. The Gulf region must remain a safe, balanced and stable region, and we support all efforts to achieve calm there. Our standpoint is that the security of Iraq and the security of the region are one and the same, and that the best security is the kind that all States share responsibility for and cannot be fragmented under any conditions.

**Annex 21****Statement by the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, allow me to thank you, Sir, for your invitation to participate in this Security Council meeting to discuss the current situation in the Gulf region and to thank the Russian Federation for convening the meeting.

The United Nations and the Security Council, which is hosting our debate today, constitute the international authority that has adopted the principles of security, peace and a secure life for all the peoples of the world. Those two bodies are responsible for maintaining the international order, upholding the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and implementing Security Council resolutions on the basis of international law, good-neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and mutual respect for their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. They uphold the principles of the use of peaceful means to resolve differences, refraining from the threat or use of force, and rejection of all forms of terrorism, extremism and violence. The participation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is an affirmation of its total commitment to those principles, its unshakeable faith in the role of the United Nations and the Security Council, and its ongoing support and appreciation for their efforts to promote security and stability around the world.

Since its founding in 1981, the GCC has believed in these principles and taken care to incorporate them into its statute. It has engaged proactively with the international community and cooperated in the pursuit of just causes. It has extended the hand of cooperation to all peace-loving countries, United Nations agencies and other international groups and organizations to promote the principles of tolerance and coexistence among nations and peoples, achieve stability and well-being for all, and reinforce regional and global peace and security. Over the past 40 years, the Council's trajectory has reflected the success of cooperation among the GCC States to maintain peace and security in the region in the face of challenges.

The peoples of the GCC States have also achieved comprehensive development and been highly ranked in indices of economic, social, educational and health development. They have done their part to maintain global energy supplies. The GCC countries have fulfilled their commitments to the international community to supporting counter-terrorism efforts, repudiating extremism and drying up sources of terrorist financing. The GCC States have also been quick to offer economic and humanitarian assistance to their neighbours and countries in need, and provide support to United Nations agencies and relief committees to ensure that they carry out to the fullest their role in serving those in need and helping them overcome the scourges of war, natural disaster and poverty. The response to the current coronavirus disease pandemic shows how quick the GCC States have been to provide assistance to States and peoples around the world.

The Council's successful proactive cooperation with the international community and responsible engagement with comprehensive development issues have garnered it a highly regarded place on the world stage. The events and activities hosted by GCC States bear witness to that success on the ground. Saudi Arabia has served as Chair of the Group of Twenty. The city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates is organizing activities for Expo 2020-2021. Qatar will host the World Cup in 2022. All these international activities reflect the faith of the GCC in cooperating and working with the States of the world that love peace and stability to serve all humankind in all fields.

The GCC believes in the right of peoples to live in security, prosperity and stability. The Council has worked to translate that faith into reality for the benefit of all and to build a regional stability that creates an environment conducive to comprehensive development, growth and progress. At the same time, the GCC has striven to maintain its gains and achievements and the stability of its States and peoples, which are the cornerstone of security and stability as a whole in the Gulf region, which is in turn so important, vital and pivotal to regional and global peace and security.

Unfortunately, that has not always been the case. The Gulf region today, despite the ties of neighbourliness and history shared by the countries of the region, is a hot spot that suffers from constant tensions brought about by non-compliance with the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions. The result has been intervention in the internal affairs of GCC States, failure to respect their sovereignty, and destabilization.

It is regrettable that the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly since 2011, has adopted an approach of hostility, violence and destabilization to achieve its political objectives in the region. Some GCC States have been repeatedly attacked by Iran and its proxies in the region. That includes ballistic-missile and drone attacks on civilians and civilian targets in Saudi Arabia, and terrorist acts — which Iran has been proven to support — against a number of GCC States. Iran has supported violent acts in a number of countries in the region. It has trained, financed and armed terrorist and sectarian organizations, causing widespread violence and instability in countries of the region such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, which we wish had been invited to take part in our session today. Every day, humanitarian suffering is taking place in those areas before the eyes and ears of the international community and the Security Council. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for what he said regarding Yemen. What Yemen is going through today is entirely to be expected. We must shine a clear light on the factors that brought Yemen to where it is today.

The GCC affirms that the security of the GCC countries is an indivisible whole. It also completely rejects continued interventions by Iran in the internal affairs of GCC States, or any other States in the region. It stresses that an end must be put to support by Iran for terrorist and sectarian militias, which is the primary factor in igniting and prolonging conflicts. The GCC also stresses that it categorically rejects efforts to impose hegemony on Gulf States and their peoples.

With regard to the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Gulf region, the GCC stresses the need for a comprehensive international agreement to make sure that Iran is prevented from obtaining nuclear weapons of any kind. It calls on Iran to fulfil all its commitments to the International Atomic Energy Agency and cooperate fully with the Agency's inspectors. The Gulf Cooperation Council also emphasizes the right of all States in the region to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It calls for compliance with all precautionary measures to ensure the safety of nuclear facilities.

The continued occupation by Iran of the three islands Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which belong to the United Arab Emirates, threatens the security and stability of the Gulf. The GCC has called on Iran to respond to the efforts of the United Arab Emirates to resolve the issue through direct negotiations or recourse to the International Court of Justice. Unfortunately, Iran has not responded to those efforts and continues to occupy those islands.

Achieving, reinforcing and maintaining the security we seek in the Gulf region requires full adherence to the basic principles on which the Organization was founded, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations and affirmed by Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. That would restore trust among all the

countries of the region. There must also be an end to the use of force, violence and destabilization as a means of resolving disputes. To that end, the GCC has on more than one occasion proposed to Iran clear and unhesitating compliance with the principles of good neighbourliness, respect for the national sovereignty of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and respect for their political systems, territorial integrity and national unity, along with the renunciation of violence, terrorism and sectarianism. These principles are drawn from the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions.

The ball is now in Iran's court. It must demonstrate its desire to achieve peace and stability in the region by actions rather than words, through concrete and convincing measures to build trust with its neighbours with a view to realizing security and stability for the region and its peoples, and in support of global stability.

The GCC, the Gulf region and the world recently bid farewell to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the departed Amir of Kuwait. He was present at the inception and helped to create the region. He worked for peace, believed in dialogue and was quick to try to reconcile differing viewpoints and resolve disputes. He believed in a better tomorrow for the region and its peoples. Working to reinforce those ideas and translate them into reality under the aegis of the United Nations and the Security Council is perhaps the best tribute we can offer to the departed Amir and his message of security, peace, dialogue, development and cooperation. That is what we call for today, and that is what we will continue to pursue.

**Annex 22****Statement by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboulgheit**

Allow me to thank you sincerely, Mr. President, for the holding of this important meeting, which addresses one of the most important issues for the security and stability of our region. The security of the Arab Gulf is a fundamental pillar of the concept of Arab national security. I thank the Russian Federation for convening this constructive and frank dialogue on the issue, following up on the initiative that it put forward last year on de-escalation, confidence-building and creating a system for collective security in the Arabian Gulf — which the initiative, unfortunately, calls the Persian Gulf.

The Arab Gulf region remains one of the most vulnerable in the world to the threat of armed conflict. In the past year, we have witnessed an unprecedented escalation that included subversive military actions — for which the United Nations recently demonstrated the responsibility of a particular party — threats to international navigation and the use of militias within certain States.

This unprecedented escalation has been cause for alarm among all responsible international forces and drawn attention to the danger that events might blow up and spin out of control. That is certainly something that no Arab State wants, nor any other global Power that loves and works for peace.

Building a system of collective security in the Arabian Gulf region is an ambitious goal that remains distant given the current difficult and dangerous reality of the region. To be perfectly frank, there is still a big gap between conceptions of security on the two sides of the Gulf.

From the Arab point of view, security is rooted in national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. That conception has been subjected to various threats over the last decade. We have seen terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, that do not recognize borders and seek to establish a so-called “Islamic caliphate”. We have also witnessed various military, political and ideological interventions in the affairs of a number of Arab States that have exacerbated existing conflicts within these countries and caused them to erupt in civil wars, as has happened in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere.

The concept of national sovereignty is a cornerstone of regional security. The organization I represent is an organization of States with full sovereignty and independence. I am convinced that the first step towards building the much-needed trust between the two shores of the Arabian Gulf must be a frank discussion of this concept in all its practical ramifications. At a time when almost everyone has no trouble declaring respect for national sovereignty, there are still some who do not hesitate to actively and repeatedly violate that sovereignty on the ground.

Confidence-building measures must be based on mutual appreciation by both sides of each other’s security concerns. The Arab side continues to feel that its security concerns are not adequately understood or appreciated by the other party in the context of widespread conflicts in the region and across the world. This, in our view, is the most important barrier to establishing a sustainable system of collective security in the Arabian Gulf region that guarantees the security of all parties, responds to their concerns and realizes their strategic interests.

The Arabs are seeking a healthy and constructive relationship with their neighbours in the Middle East. I have no doubt that that will require the creation of the Palestinian State recognized by Israel and the international community following an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory. On the other hand, there

is equally no doubt that the security of the Gulf, from the point of view of the Arab side, can truly come about only when the concepts of good-neighbourly relations and refraining from the threat or use of force prevail. Then — and only then — can a genuine system of collective security be established that guarantees the interests of all parties and ensures the freedom of navigation in the Gulf, which is a strategic priority for the entire world. This is the situation to which we aspire. Unfortunately, it remains out of reach. That is what has prompted the Arab side to pursue any and all means to safeguard its higher interests and preserve its security and existence.

Stability in the Gulf can be achieved only when we accept that no party can realize its own security when others feel threatened. The Arab side seeks security for all without exception on the basis of mutual respect and good-neighbourliness. Ambitions of hegemony and domination have no place and are unacceptable.

I thank you once again, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting.

**Annex 23****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, allow me to thank His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, for presiding over this meeting personally. I also congratulate your country on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We appreciate your initiative in seizing this opportunity to convene this meeting. We appreciate the valuable participation of the Secretary-General, Mr. Robert Malley, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group, and Mr. Vitaly Naumkin, President of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Our region is distinguished by a strategic importance that stretches beyond its geographical boundaries. That makes sustainable stability there an international goal. However, the beneficiaries of stability in the region are first and foremost its States and peoples. That is motivation enough for us to work for the peaceful resolution of crises, political stability and security and preventive diplomacy.

The State of Qatar welcomes constructive initiatives that seek ways to de-escalate and resolve differences by means of dialogue. That approach is at the heart of Qatar's foreign policy and the way it deals with the Gulf crisis. The State of Qatar favours the voice of wisdom and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. From the start, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar, has called for serious and constructive dialogue based on common interests, good-neighbourliness, mutual respect for the sovereignty, independence and unity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. His Highness has expressed his commitment to mediation — including the efforts of his Highness the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah — and the efforts of brotherly and friendly countries.

In Qatar, as in other States, we strive to preserve our interests while adhering to established principles. But we are also aware that the interests and common destiny that unite the States of our region are vastly greater than what divides us. We remain fully convinced that sustainable peace in the region can be achieved only by an approach to crisis resolution that operates within collective frameworks. On that basis, the State of Qatar has always been a strong supporter of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a model subregional framework for cooperation and coordination. Disputes and conflicts between its members are settled under its aegis, which was one of the reasons it was originally established.

That is why, even before the crises in the Gulf region deteriorated to their current state, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar, called in 2015 on the General Assembly to reach agreement on rules to regulate relations between Iran and the GCC States and to conduct a meaningful dialogue on the basis of common interests, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

His Highness also put forward a specific vision for overcoming regional tensions by establishing an effective framework for collective security in our region. In his speech to the Munich Security Conference in 2018, he called for agreement on basic security guidelines and governance rules and for a minimum level of security that would allow for peace and prosperity. That would ensure not only an end to existing crises but also prevent their future occurrence or escalation through an



approach based on integration rather than conflict and common interests rather than unilateral objectives.

If we want to discuss how to reduce tensions, we must recognize that the first step towards sustainable stability and de-escalation is to sincerely adopt an approach towards ending these crises that is consistent with the principles of confidence-building, good-neighbourliness and common interests. There are a number of common challenges and risks before us. Perhaps the most notable are terrorism, climate threats and epidemics. As a first step, cooperation to meet these common challenges can pave the way for the resolution of the more complex crises in the Middle East, which can be resolved only on the basis of law, respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the establishment of security, development and protection for human rights.

We affirm the fundamental role of the United Nations in conflict resolution as an effective international framework whose effectiveness and reliability must be further enhanced to realize solutions. The major Powers can also play an important role in supporting stability. No matter how interests might differ, there is always room for reconciliation.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar will continue to support initiatives that promote diplomatic solutions to crises and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Once again, allow us to express our appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this meeting.

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