UN Security Council 90-day briefing on Iran sanctions

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Statement by Mark Lyall Grant, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations

Mr President. I'd like to add my voice to others congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month and to pay tribute to the stewardship of Ambassador Araud and his French team during the month of February.

· I am grateful for Ambassador Takasu's detailed report and for the diligent work of the Committee over the past three months.

· His report shows that sanctions have had an effect. For example, they have led to several seizures of illegal Iranian arms exports, and I commend the thorough work of the states who have acted in accordance with their international obligations to ensure that Iran’s illicit activities have been disrupted. Sanctions have also made it harder for Iranian banks to finance proliferation activity, and to develop the nuclear programme.

· However, while existing measures have had some effect, they have not yet led Iran to change course on its nuclear activities.

· That is clear from the most recent report of the IAEA, whose charge sheet against Iran is getting longer with each report. It reinforces our fears that Iran is acting duplicitously and illegally. I would highlight five particular areas covered, including one new example of non-cooperation.

· First, Iran showed its contempt of the Security Council resolutions through the construction of a site at Qom and announcing its intention to build 10 further enrichment plants. The report states the development of the Qom site was “inconsistent with its obligations under the Subsidiary Arrangements of its Safeguards Agreement and raises concerns about the completeness of its declarations.”

· Second, the report states that Iran has provided the Agency with measurement results indicating that enrichment levels of up to 19.8% were obtained between 9 and 11 February.
Moreover, the report highlights that although the Agency told Iran not to start enriching to 20%, Iran continued to do so anyway.

- It states that Iran has now installed 8610 centrifuges of which 3772 are operating. And it has increased its stockpile of Low Enriched Uranium to more than 2000 kg.

- Thirdly, the IAEA Director General makes clear that there has been no Iranian cooperation with the IAEA on outstanding issues concerning possible military dimensions for 18 months. And he states that the information available to the Agency on these issues, and I quote, “altogether, raises concerns about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile”, unquote.

- Fourth, the report also highlights new areas of non-cooperation, for example, that Iran has refused to allow the Agency to take samples of heavy water stored at Isfahan or access to the Heavy Water Production Plant.

- Fifth, the report makes clear that Iran has still not implemented the Additional Protocol. The Director General “urges Iran to take steps to fully implement its safeguards and other obligations” and we fully support the IAEA efforts in this regard.

- Iran’s true intentions were also shown by its failure to respond constructively to the proposal to replace fuel rods at the Tehran Nuclear Research Reactor using Iran’s 3.5% LEU stocks. That proposal met Iran’s wish to secure fuel for this research reactor, and it would have been a real confidence boost to the prospects of a broader dialogue with Iran or nuclear matters.

- But despite initial signals that Iran could accept such a deal, it instead made counter-proposals in complete opposition to the spirit and the purpose of the agreement.

Mr President,

- Iran’s current trajectory is illegal and destabilising. The IAEA report emphasises again that they are unable to verify that Iran’s nuclear programme is for non-military purposes. And without this reassurance, there is a very real possibility that Iran’s actions could lead to increased proliferation across the region.

- However, the prospect of tough sanctions means that this scenario is not inevitable. Despite Iranian boasting, we can still persuade Iran to comply with IAEA requirements by making the cost of their current nuclear programme too great to bear.

- Further measures would demonstrate that the international community is united behind a diplomatic resolution to Iran’s nuclear issue, and stave off any pre-emptive moves by others to resolve issue this by other means.
· Adopting further measures represents the best prospect for bringing Iran into serious negotiations to resolve the IAEA concerns. Such measures should be smart and effective. They should target areas with an impact on the regime’s policy calculations. They should show the regime the extent to which the costs of their nuclear programme outweigh any dubious benefits. At the same time, we should reaffirm our willingness to continue to engage with Iran.

· The E3+3 has offered economic benefits such as investment and trade, help so that Iran can develop civilian nuclear power; and a renewed relationship with the international community based on respect and equality.

· We have never denied Iran’s right to pursue a peaceful civilian nuclear programme. But with that right comes responsibility, and Iran needs to restore trust in the international community. Their continued silence on possible weaponisation activities combined with the revelation of secret enrichment sites and aggressive rhetoric does little to restore trust in their intentions, but merely adds to our concerns about their programme.

· The UK and its international partners, including the EU, are committed to the dual track strategy and we hope that this council will continue to support us in these efforts.

Thank you, Mr President.