UN Security Council briefing on the 1737 Committee

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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

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Mr President, I thank Ambassador Takasu for his report and commend him for his continuec able leadership of the 1737 Committee.

It has been a busy and difficult three months for the Committee - a period in which, as the report makes clear, a pattern of sanctions violations has emerged. As the report notes, there were two violations of Security Council Resolution 1747 of a similar nature in this reporting period. First, the Hansa India interdiction in October. And later, the Francop seizure in November. We are grateful for the prompt, effective and responsible action of all states concerned with these interdictions and seizures and for their cooperation with the Committee in investigating the cases. This has ensured that the prohibited arms and related materiel have neither been returned to Iran nor allowed onward to their intended destinations.

These incidents leave no doubt that Iran is determined to flout the requirements of the Security Council. But they also show that the international community is determined that Iran abide by international rules and that mandatory Security Council Resolutions must be upheld.

Mr President,

It is worth restating the reasons for these measures. Iran lost the trust of the international community by hiding the most sensitive aspects of its programme for nearly 20 years, failing to implement IAEA transparency measures and refusing to answer all of the questions put to it by the IAEA as they sought to establish the facts.

The most recent report by former IAEA Director-General Dr El Baradei concludes, as his previous reports have done, that he was unable to verify that Iran’s nuclear programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes. It makes clear that Iran has not suspended its
enrichment-related activities or its work on heavy water related projects as required by the Security Council.

The report also covers the IAEA’s initial conclusions following their inspection of the enrichment facility at Qom. Development of this site was in contravention of five Security Council Resolutions. The Agency makes clear that it was “inconsistent with Iran’s obligations under the Subsidiary Arrangements of its Safeguard Agreement”. These state that Iran must inform the Agency of new nuclear facilities at the time of the decision to construct. It is essential that Iran suspend all enrichment-related activities, including any further construction work, at Qom.

Iran asserts that it began construction of the Qom facility in 2007. The Agency makes clear that they have information that shows that Iran started construction before that date, noting that “Iran’s explanation about the purpose and the chronology of its design and construction requires further clarification”.

The report also shows that Iran has continued to ignore the Agency’s crucial questions over Iran’s weaponisation activities. The report states that “the Agency is also still awaiting Iran’s response to the Agency’s repeated requests for access to persons, information and locations identified in the alleged studies documents…”.

The report concludes again that until these issues are clarified, and until Iran implements the Additional Protocol, the Agency will not be in a position to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear activities by Iran.

Mr President,

Iran’s refusal to respond positively to the IAEA’s proposed agreement on the provision of fuel to the Tehran Nuclear Research Reactor is also disappointing. The deal offered a fair, viable and transparent means of meeting Iran’s needs. It would have improved the prospects for a successful negotiation with Iran. Instead, Iran has shown once again its unwillingness to engage seriously with the international community.

This proposed agreement showed that the international community does not wish to deny Iran its right to civil nuclear power. We would support its development of peaceful nuclear energy, providing that it meets its international obligations. And the generous E3+3 offer contains everything that Iran needs to pursue a modern civil nuclear power programme, which it claims is its aim.

However, Iran has taken every opportunity to delay and protract our efforts to reach agreement on this issue. The only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that their responses are calculated to buy time and to try to divide the international community.

Mr President,
The IAEA Board of Governors voted overwhelmingly to support the IAEA in its efforts to get answers to important questions. The vote sent a strong signal to Tehran. Iran’s response was to announce the construction of even more enrichment facilities, to threaten to cease contact with the IAEA and to speculate about leaving the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Instead of engaging with us, Iran chooses to provoke and dissemble. Iran can flaunt its isolation, but this will only increase the determination and unity of the international community. I urge Iran to recognise this, and to accept the outstretched hand that is on offer.

Mr President,

We need to dissuade Iran from continuing to develop and acquire proliferation sensitive technology and materials. This risks sparking a regional nuclear arms race. In a region which already faces huge security challenges, nuclear proliferation would be disastrous for regional stability.

Mr President,

The international community has been very patient, but that patience is running out. If Iran continues to choose not to engage with us, we shall need to seek further sanctions. Our dual-track strategy will continue – pressure to encourage the Iranians to comply and to negotiate seriously, at the same time as engagement, to allow negotiations to begin when the Iranians are prepared to take the E3+3 offer seriously.

We are 100% committed to solving these issues diplomatically. We hope that Iran’s leaders are too. But ultimately that is a choice that only they can make.

Thank you Mr President.