

Debate Pack

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Iran's nuclear programme

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Background

A Backbench Business Committee debate on Iran's nuclear programme is scheduled for Thursday 30 June 2022 in the House of Commons chamber.

What is the Iran nuclear deal?

On 14 July 2015, Iran and the P5+1 group—the US, UK, France, Germany, China and Russia—reached an agreement on a long-term deal regarding Iran's nuclear capabilities. The deal, known as the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#) (JCPOA), committed Iran to reducing its stockpile of enriched uranium, limiting further enrichment activities, and verified monitoring and inspections, in exchange for sanctions relief. Under the agreement non-compliance could see sanctions automatically reintroduced (the snapback provisions).

The deal was intended to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons programme. It did not include broader measures on Iranian foreign policy or its ballistic missile programme.

The deal was endorsed by [UN Security Council Resolution 2231](#). It is overseen by a Joint Commission comprising the signatories of the agreement and the EU. The Commission is chaired by EU High Representative Josep Borrell. Iran's compliance with the JCPOA is monitored and verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

During his 2016 Presidential campaign Donald Trump made it clear that withdrawing the US from the deal would be one of his top foreign policy priorities. Despite Iran's verified compliance with the agreement by the IAEA, the [US withdrew from the deal in 2018 and reimposed all US sanctions](#). The remaining signatories to the JCPOA did not follow suit.

Iranian non-compliance with the deal

Since May 2019 Iran has incrementally violated the terms of the agreement. It has lifted the cap on its stockpile of uranium, increased its enrichment activities beyond the 3.67 per cent permitted under the JCPOA and resumed activity at nuclear facilities that were previously prohibited from uranium enrichment under the terms of the deal. The Iranian Government has linked those violations to the failure of the deal to deliver sanctions relief, and by default the US decision to withdraw and reimpose sanctions.

At the beginning of January 2020, the Iranian Government went one step further and announced that it would no longer abide by any of its commitments under the JCPOA. As a result, there would be no restrictions on

Iran's uranium stockpile or enrichment programme going forward and its nuclear programme would [“be developed solely based on its technical needs”](#).

On 14 January 2020 the E3 (UK, France and Germany) referred the matter to the Joint Commission of the JCPOA. After almost a year of dispute resolution, in December 2020 the Iranian Parliament and Guardian Council passed legislation requiring the Government to speed up its resumption of nuclear activities if sanctions relief was not forthcoming by 21 February 2021. The law also provided for Iran to suspend implementation of the Additional Protocol on safeguards and to reduce cooperation with the IAEA, which it did on 23 February 2021. In line with its nuclear laws [Iran started enriching uranium to 20% in early 2021 and then moved to 60% enrichment in April 2021](#), far beyond what is considered necessary for civilian purposes. Weapons grade uranium is enriched to 90%.

In August 2021 the IAEA also verified that Iran had begun producing uranium metal, which has little civilian purpose and is applicable to nuclear weapons development.

How close is Iran to getting a nuclear weapon?

Under the terms of the JCPOA, Iran's breakout time - the time it could take Iran to produce enough fissile material for nuclear weapons - had been estimated at one year. Its breakout time is [now estimated at a few weeks](#).

Estimates of breakout time do not account, however, for the technological capability and time required to build a deliverable nuclear warhead ([which has been estimated by some at 1-2 years](#)), whether there is the political will to proceed toward weaponisation, and the impact of likely pre-emptive action by external actors, such as Israel, should Iran progress to this point.

Iran continues to maintain that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes and that all activities initiated in the last few years are reversible if sanctions are lifted.

Status of talks

After President Biden indicated his willingness to re-join the JCPOA in early 2021, negotiators held six rounds of talks aimed at restoring the agreement. Progress was considered to have been made under the previous Iranian administration of Hassan Rouhani, despite significant challenges remaining, specifically in relation to Iran's recent nuclear advancements, its missile programme and its regional foreign policies. However, a deal was not concluded before Rouhani left office in August 2021.

While there was hope that negotiations could resume quickly under the new President, Ebrahim Raisi, Iran did not return to the negotiating table until late November 2021.

Despite Iran's hardline stance in negotiations and continued escalation of its nuclear activities, including the [installation of additional centrifuges at its enrichment facilities at Natanz and Fordow](#), there were hopes in early 2022 that a deal on the JCPOA was imminent.

However, on 11 March 2022, the EU foreign policy representative, Josep Borrell, said [talks would be paused due to "external factors"](#). Russia was reported to have demanded guarantees, as part of the JCPOA talks, that US-led sanctions imposed in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine should not affect its trade with Iran. In a statement following the pause in talks, E3 countries, Germany, France and the UK said: ["Nobody should seek to exploit JCPOA negotiations to obtain assurances that are separate to the JCPOA"](#).

The EU High Representative indicated, however, that talks had been paused to allow time for political consideration by the US and Iran of a text that had been concluded, albeit one that left several "open questions" unanswered.

That pause in negotiations has, however, become protracted. Concerns remain that, on its current trajectory, Iran will soon acquire irreversible nuclear knowledge that renders the JCPOA meaningless and negate the need for future talks or any future agreement.

Iran's demand on IRGC designation

In addition to the removal of all sanctions against Iran, including those related to human rights, a mechanism to verify the lifting of sanctions and a guarantee from the US that any future administration could not abandon the deal, Iran also wants the [US designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps \(IRGC\)](#) as a foreign terrorist organisation, to be removed.

The US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, has called Iran's demand ["extraneous" to the JCPOA](#) and that the US was prepared to conclude a deal on the basis of negotiations that concluded in March 2022.

IAEA resolution on Iranian non-cooperation

At the end of May 2022, the IAEA Director General published his [latest report on Iran's compliance with its safeguard obligations](#). Presenting his findings to the IAEA Board of Governors at the beginning of June, the Director General said Iran had outstanding safeguards issues on undeclared nuclear material and locations that required ["technically credible explanations"](#).

At the [instigation of the E3 and the US](#), the IAEA Board of Governors subsequently passed a resolution criticising Iran's "insufficient substantive cooperation" on these longstanding issues and called on the country to ["fulfil](#)

its legal obligations” and “clarify and resolve all outstanding safeguards issues”.

The E3 and the US welcomed the IAEA resolution. Having previously called for the IAEA to discontinue its investigation, the Iranian government said the resolution was “miscalculated and ill-advised”, suggesting that it was based on fabricated information provided by Israel. In response, the government informed the IAEA that it would reduce transparency measures with the IAEA and turn off several “beyond safeguards” cameras at its nuclear sites. IAEA Director General, Rafael Grossi, said that if Iran did not reinstate the cameras within a few weeks it could deal “a fatal blow” to the JCPOA.

Talks to resume “within days”

On 25 June 2022 the EU High Representative, Josep Borrell, held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister, Hossein Amirabdollahian, on the stalled JCPOA negotiations and called on all sides to “stop this escalation” of the current impasse.

Both sides agreed to resume talks “in the coming days”. Ahead of talks, which are being held in Qatar instead of Vienna, Iran called for “realism from the American side”. A US State Department official said on 27 June that the US was “prepared to immediately conclude and implement the deal we negotiated in Vienna for mutual return to full implementation of the JCPOA” but reiterated that “Iran needs to decide to drop their additional demands that go beyond the JCPOA”.

Further reading

House of Commons Library, Status of the Iran nuclear deal, 14 October 2021

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Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: The Library is not responsible for either the views of accuracy of external content.

[Qatar to host indirect Iran-US talks on reviving 2015 nuclear deal](#)

Reuters

Parisa Hafezi and Andrew Mills

27 June 2022

[Qatar to reportedly host JCPOA talks](#)

Mehr News Agency

Kamal Iranidoost

27 June 2022

[President Raisi tells nation: Improper act by US, E3 to submit IAEA resolution](#)

Islamic Republic News Agency

27 June 2022

[US should convince Iran it would fully fulfill deal](#)

Mehr News Agency

27 June 2022

[Open letter to the US and Iranian leadership on the Iran Nuclear Deal](#)

European Leadership Network

26 April 2022

[Iran launches rocket into space as nuclear talks to resume](#)

Independent

26 June 2022

[Israeli foreign minister slams EU's Borrell over Iran outreach](#)

Politico

David Herszenhorn

26 June 2022

[Borrell, in Tehran, says Iran nuclear talks will resume soon](#)

Politico

David Herszenhorn

25 June 2022

Ali Shamkhani: Iran after strong, reliable, lasting JCPOA revival deal

Islamic Republic News Agency

25 June 2022

Expert groups call on Biden to save Iran nuclear deal

Mehr News Agency

25 June 2022

Iran and US ready to restart talks on nuclear deal

The Guardian

Patrick Wintour

25 June 2022

Don't write off the Iran nuclear deal just yet

Al-Monitor

24 June 2022

Borrell in Tehran: How to overcome three obstacles to the Iran nuclear deal

European Council on Foreign Affairs (ecfr.eu)

Ellie Geranmayeh

24 June 2022

BRICS emphasizes diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear issue

Mehr News Agency

Morteza Ahmadi Al Hashem

24 June 2022

American Faith leaders call on Biden to return to JCPOA

Islamic Republic News Agency

24 June 2022

Iran blames US for stalled nuclear talks, but maintains 'train not derailed'

Times of Israel

20 June 2022

Iran continues cooperation with IAEA

Islamic Republic News Agency

14 June 2022

Iran submits note to IAEA on DG report

Islamic Republic News Agency

14 June 2022

Fada Hossein Maleki: Iran not to keep mute in face of IAEA resolutions

Islamic Republic News Agency

13 June 2022

Crisis over cameras threatens to scupper Iran nuclear talks

Financial Times

Andrew England, Najmeh Bozorgmehr and Felicia Schwartz

13 June 2022

Iran removing 27 surveillance cameras at nuclear sites: IAEA

Al Jazeera

9 June 2022

West to rebuke Iran over lack of cooperation with nuclear watchdog

The Guardian

Patrick Wintour

8 June 2022

Top EU diplomat warns prospect of restoring Iran nuclear deal 'is shrinking'

Times of Israel

Toi Staff

4 June 2022

Bennett to IAEA chief: Israel reserves right to act against Iran's nuclear program

Times of Israel

Toi Staff

3 June 2022

Iran lied about banned nuclear activity using stolen documents – Israel

BBC News Online

31 May 2022

Why Has Europe Stuck Behind the JCPOA?

RUSI Commentary

Cinzia Bianco

23 May 2022

Iran denies 'compromise' in nuclear deal negotiations

Al Jazeera

Maziar Motamedi

22 May 2022

Qatar, EU say pushing stalled Iran nuclear talks

Euractiv.com

13 May 2022

What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal?

European Council on Foreign Affairs (ecfr.eu)
Kali Robinson
28 April 2022

How much of a proliferation threat is Iran's uranium enrichment?

(SIPRI) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
Robert E. Kelley
16 April 2022

Will the Iran Deal Be a Pillar of Stability or a Risky Gamble?

RUSI Commentary
Baraa Shiban
8 April 2022

Iran, IAEA Agree on New Safeguards Plan

Arms Control Today
Samuel M. Hickey
April 2022

Netanyahu: Blinken making a 'big mistake' on Iran nuclear deal

Times of Israel
Toi Staff
27 March 2022

Agreement and uncertainty: The Iran nuclear deal in a new global order

European Council on Foreign Affairs (ecfr.eu)
Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj
17 March 2022

Iran nuclear deal talks put on hold after Russia digs in its heels

The Times
Anchal Vohra
11 March 2022

EU says 'pause' in Iran nuclear talks needed due to 'external factors'

Times of Israel
Jon Gambrell
11 March 2022

Iran inches closer to nuclear deal

Financial Times
Andrew England
4 March 2022

Addressing the Iranian Missile Threat: A Regional Approach to Risk Reduction and Arms Control

International Institute for Strategic Studies
March 2022

Iran nuclear talks deadlock risks dangerous vacuum

The Guardian
Patrick Wintour
17 January 2022

Sharp relief: Automatic benefits and the Iran nuclear deal

European Council on Foreign Affairs (ecfr.eu)
Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj
11 November 2021

Fool me once: How Tehran views the Iran nuclear deal

European Council on Foreign Affairs (ecfr.eu)
Ali Reza Eshraghi
25 February 2021

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Government press releases

E3 statement on Iran: 9 June 2022

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
9 June 2022

Non-proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement with Iran: E3 statement to the IAEA, June 2022

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
9 June 2022

Statement by the E3 and US to the IAEA Board of Governors introducing resolution on Iran's non-cooperation with the IAEA

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
9 June 2022

E3 and US welcome IAEA Board of Governors resolution

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
8 June 2022

E3 statement to the IAEA Board of Governors on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, June 2022

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
7 June 2022

NPT Safeguards Agreement with Iran: E3 statement to the IAEA, March 2022

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
9 March 2022

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action: E3 statement to the IAEA Board of Governors, March 2022

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
8 March 2022

UK condemns Iran's use of ballistic missiles: FCDO statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
24 December 2021

Iran's current path of nuclear escalation risks provoking a serious crisis

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
14 December 2021

The diplomatic door is firmly open for Iran to do a deal now

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
14 December 2021

NPT Safeguards Agreement with Iran: E3 statement to the IAEA, November 2021

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
26 November 2021

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action: E3 statement to the IAEA, November 2021

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
24 November 2021

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss to meet Iranian Foreign Minister to discuss detained British nationals and nuclear deal

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
20 September 2021

E3 Statement at the IAEA Board of Governors on verification and monitoring in Iran (JCPoA), September 2021

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
15 September 2021

E3 Statement on the JCPoA: 19 August 2021

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
19 August 2021

IAEA report on Iran producing enriched uranium metal: E3 statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
6 July 2021

Committed to full implementation of the JCPoA

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
30 June 2021

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Other press releases

[Iran: Remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell at the press conference with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Hossein Amirabdollahian](#)

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
25 June 2022

[Iran: Remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after talks in Tehran](#)

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
24 June 2022

[EU statement at the IAEA Board of Governors delivered under the agenda item on NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran on 8 June 2022](#)

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
08 June 2022

[EU statement at the IAEA Board of Governors delivered under the agenda item on verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 \(2015\) on 7 June 2022](#)

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
07 June 2022

[The European Union completes the first phase of co-operation with the Iran Nuclear Regulatory Authority](#)

European Commission
07 April 2022

[The European Union completes the first phase of co-operation with the Iran Nuclear Regulatory Authority](#)

European Commission
07 April 2022

[EU Statement on Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 \(2015\) as delivered at the International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\) Board of Governors on 8 March 2022](#)

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
08 March 2022

Briefing by Ambassador Skoog on behalf of the HR/VP – United Nations Security Council meeting on Non-Proliferation: JCPOA (Iran)

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
14 December 2021

Iran: High Representative/Vice-President Borrell meets with Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
22 September 2021

Iran: High Representative Josep Borrell spoke to new Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
27 August 2021

Saving the Iran Nuclear Deal

The European External Action Service (EEAS)
14 July 2020

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Parliamentary questions

[Iran: Nuclear Power](#)

07 Apr 2022 | HL7322

Asked by: Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the adequacy of oversight of Iran's nuclear programme in the renegotiated Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran (JCPOA) agreement; and (2) the possibility of re-imposing sanctions in the event of breach of the agreement.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are at the end of talks to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA). The deal on the table is a result of intensive negotiations and is based on input from all JCPoA participants, and the United States. The US has offered to lift JCPoA-related sanctions which would benefit the Iranian people. In exchange, Iran would reverse its nuclear escalation, return its nuclear programme to strict JCPoA limits and restore extensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The ability to re-impose sanctions in response to Iranian non-compliance with its commitments is a key part of the JCPoA, and the process for doing this is set out in the JCPoA and UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

[Iran: Nuclear Power](#)

06 Apr 2022 | HL7246

Asked by: Lord Austin of Dudley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the approach of the government of the United States to the negotiations on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, following confirmation of the departure of three members of the United States negotiating team on 24 January.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We have reached the end of talks in Vienna to restore the JCPoA. The deal on the table is a result of intensive negotiations and is based on input from all JCPoA participants, and the United States. The US has offered to lift JCPoA-related sanctions which would benefit the Iranian people. In exchange, Iran would reverse its nuclear escalation, return its nuclear programme to strict JCPoA limits and restore extensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We urge all parties to focus on rapidly concluding the deal and implementing it in full.

[Iran: Nuclear Weapons](#)

31 Mar 2022 | 145842

Asked by: Jack Lopresti

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help prevent Iran from developing long-range nuclear-capable ballistic missiles.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Iran's ballistic missile programme is destabilising for the region and poses a threat to European security. UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (UNSCR 2231), which was unanimously adopted in the Security Council and underpins the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), calls on Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon, including launches using such ballistic missile technology. Alongside France and Germany, we have written regularly to the UN Secretary-General, most recently on 31 January, to draw attention to Iranian missile activity inconsistent with UNSCR 2231. We urge Iran to fully abide by UNSCR 2231 and all other relevant resolutions.

Russia: Iran

28 Mar 2022 | HL6929

Asked by: Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent Russian demands in negotiations with Iran towards a new Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are at the end of talks to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). There is a fair and comprehensive deal on the table which would reverse Iran's nuclear programme, return its programme to strict JCPOA limits, and restore extensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency. It would also provide economic benefit to the Iranian people.

The sanctions in place on Russia due to their unprovoked invasion of Ukraine are entirely separate to the Iran nuclear deal. We reject attempts to exploit JCPOA negotiations to obtain assurances that are separate to the JCPOA. We urge all parties to focus on rapidly concluding the deal and implementing it in full.

Iran: Nuclear Weapons

21 Mar 2022 | 138362

Asked by: Robert Lorgan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policy on regional stability of the technical abilities and knowledge Iran has acquired during its progressive breaches of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Iran has been out of compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments since 2019. Iran's nuclear programme is more advanced today than it has ever been and is undermining regional and international security. The deal on the table in Vienna talks would return Iran to full compliance with its JCPOA commitments. It would reverse Iran's nuclear escalation, return its nuclear programme to strict JCPOA limits and restore extensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The full implementation of the JCPOA could contribute positively to regional prosperity and security in the Middle East and beyond. We urge a conclusion of this deal.

[Iran: Nuclear Power](#)

17 Mar 2022 | 137306

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her Iranian counterparts on recommencing the 2015 nuclear deal between that country and other international counterparts.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In a recent call with Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian, the Foreign Secretary stressed the urgency to conclude the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) deal and make clear that there would not be a better deal on offer. The deal would provide a fair and comprehensive offer of US sanctions-lifting for the benefit of the Iranian people. In exchange, Iran would reverse its nuclear escalation, return its nuclear programme to strict JCPOA limits and restore extensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

[Iran: Nuclear Power](#)

15 Mar 2022 | 137219

Asked by: David Lammy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in (a) the US and (b) Iran on negotiations to restore Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action compliance.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign Secretary met US Secretary of State Blinken on 9 March and discussed negotiations on restoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). They agreed on the urgency of concluding the deal in Vienna. The deal would provide a fair and comprehensive offer of US sanctions-lifting for the benefit of the Iranian people. In exchange, Iran would reverse its nuclear escalation, return its nuclear programme to strict JCPOA limits and restore

extensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Foreign Secretary also underlined the urgency for concluding this deal in a recent call with Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian, making clear that there would not be a better deal on offer.

Iran: Nuclear Weapons

23 Feb 2022 | 124979

Asked by: Fabian Hamilton

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her US counterpart on reports that Iran may have enough material to acquire nuclear weapons in weeks.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Iran's nuclear programme is more advanced than it has ever been. We are in the end game of negotiations to restore the JCPoA and reverse Iran's nuclear escalation. A conclusion is needed in the coming days. In a call on 15 February, and in person in Munich on 18 February, the Foreign Secretary discussed with her French, German and US counterparts the urgency of concluding this deal and returning Iran to full compliance with its nuclear commitments under the JCPoA. The Foreign Secretary also discussed this with Secretary Blinken on 12 February and with Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian on 14 February.

Iran: Nuclear Power

02 Feb 2022 | 111557

Asked by: Matthew Offord

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will use the snapback provision to reimpose sanctions on Iran in the context of the recent trend of breaches of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by Iran.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) commitments since 2019 and its nuclear programme is more advanced today than it has ever been before. We urge Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPoA without delay and take the opportunity in front of them in the JCPoA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal.

In the event of the JCPoA collapsing, we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies, including sanctions.

Iran: Nuclear Power

02 Feb 2022 | 111556

Asked by: Matthew Offord

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps to ensure that international sanctions are imposed on Iran in the event that that country refuses to dismantle its nuclear programme and cease its regional activities.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK has over 200 sanctions designations in place against Iran including in relation to human rights, nuclear proliferation and terrorism. This includes against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety. The UK is committed to working with the international community to ensure Iran abides by international laws and norms and is held to account for its destabilising activity in the region.

We are currently engaged in negotiations in Vienna aimed at restoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). A restored JCPOA would provide for Iran's civil nuclear needs. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for the collapse of the deal. In this scenario we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies, including sanctions.

Iran: Guided Weapons

14 Jan 2022 | 98488

Asked by: Alexander Stafford

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of Iran's ballistic missile programme.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Iran is continuing the development of its ballistic missile programme, including conducting missile tests on 24 and 30 December. UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which was unanimously adopted in the Security Council and underpins the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), calls on Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon, including launches using such ballistic missile technology. These UN ballistic missile restrictions remain in place until 2023. Iran's ballistic missile programme is destabilising for the region and poses a threat to European security.

Alongside France and Germany (as E3), we have written regularly to the UN Secretary-General, most recently on 11 August, to draw attention to Iranian missile activity inconsistent with UNSCR 2231. We urge Iran to fully abide by UNSCR 2231 and all other relevant resolutions.

Iran: Nuclear Weapons

11 Jan 2022 | 94576

Asked by: Holly Mumby-Croft

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the IAEA Director General stating that the IAEA has an incomplete view of Iran's nuclear programme.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) commitments since 2019. This includes producing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) at 60 per cent, which is unprecedented for a state without a nuclear weapons programme. Iran's increasing 60 per cent stockpile is bringing Iran significantly closer to having fissile material which could be used for nuclear weapons.

We call upon Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPoA without delay and take the opportunity in front of them in the JCPoA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal. Iran's nuclear escalation means we have weeks, not months, to restore the deal before the JCPoA's core non-proliferation benefits are lost and the deal collapses. In the event of the JCPoA collapsing, we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies.

Iran: Nuclear Weapons

11 Jan 2022 | 93903

Asked by: Brendan Clarke-Smith

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK Government is taking with its international partners to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Prime Minister, alongside his French, German and US counterparts, discussed Iran's nuclear programme on 30 October in Rome where they expressed their determination to ensure that Iran can never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon.

The UK is currently engaged, alongside the US and other Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) participants, in negotiations in Vienna aimed at restoring the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal. In this scenario, we would carefully consider all the options in partnership with our allies.

Iran: Guided Weapons

22 Dec 2021 | 93069

Asked by: Greg Smith

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in the (a) European Union and (b) US Administration on Iran's ballistic missile programme.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign Secretary and her officials hold regular discussions with European partners and the US on a range of issues concerning Iran, including its nuclear and ballistic missiles programme. The most recent meeting which included consideration of Iran's ballistic missiles took place at Political Director level in November. The UK, French and German Political Directors were joined by US Special Envoy on Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt and Jordan, to discuss their mutual concerns at Iranian use and transfer of ballistic missiles. Alongside France and Germany (as E3), we have also written repeatedly to the UN Secretary-General, most recently on 11 August, to bring attention to Iranian missile activity inconsistent with UNSCR 2231, the resolution which underpins the JCPoA.

Iran: Uranium

27 Oct 2021 | HL3048

Asked by: Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Science and International Security Analysis of IAEA Iran Verification and Monitoring Report, published on 13 September, and in particular the finding that Iran is only one month away from producing weapons-grade uranium for an atomic bomb.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The information in the International Atomic Energy Authority's report of 13 September shows that Iran's nuclear programme has never been more advanced or more worrying than it is today. This includes Iran's continued efforts to increase its stockpile of enriched uranium, including at 60% and 20%; and developing and operating powerful advanced centrifuges, permanently improving its enrichment capabilities. Our priority continues to be to find a diplomatic solution to bring Iran back into compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) commitments. Iran urgently needs to return to talks in Vienna and to conclude the deal on the table.

Iran: Nuclear Fuels

06 Sep 2021 | 38377

Asked by: John Lamont

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development

Affairs, with reference to the IAEA report, Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), what recent assessment his Department has made of whether Iran's uranium enrichment programme is now at levels only countries seeking to make atomic weapons reach.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 19 August, the UK issued a joint statement with France and Germany underlining our grave concern at the latest reports of the IAEA. These reports confirm that Iran has produced uranium metal enriched up to 20% for the first time, and has significantly increased its production capacity of uranium enriched up to 60%.

60% enrichment constitutes an important step towards developing a nuclear weapon. No State without nuclear weapons has ever before produced Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU). We urge Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPoA and return to the negotiations in Vienna as soon as possible with a view to bringing them to a swift, successful conclusion.

Iran: Guided Weapons

16 Jun 2021 | 12109

Asked by: Jack Lopresti

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of Iran's ballistic missile programme.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Iran's ballistic missile programme is destabilising for the region and poses a threat to European security. UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which was unanimously adopted in the Security Council and underpins the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA), calls on Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon. These UN ballistic missile restrictions remain in place until 2023. Alongside France and Germany (as E3), we have written repeatedly to the UN Secretary-General, most recently on 18 February, to bring attention to Iranian missile activity inconsistent with UNSCR 2231. We urge Iran to fully abide by UNSCR 2231 and all other relevant resolutions.

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Parliamentary debates

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

07 Apr 2022 | House of Lords | Grand Committee | 820 cc391-406GC

Lords question for short debate on what steps the Government are taking to ensure the United Kingdom and other signatories establish a second negotiating track on "regional issues" should all parties return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action: Iran

19 Oct 2021 | House of Commons | Westminster Hall | 701 cc249-271WH

Motion that this House has considered Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

Iran

19 Oct 2021 | House of Lords | 815 cc106-127

Lords question for short debate on what their policy is towards Iran; and what engagement they have

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