

Speech: Foreign Secretary statement at the UNSC meeting on North Korea

Thank You Mr President.

The United Nations Charter defines the supreme task of this Council as the maintenance of peace and international security. There could hardly be a clearer threat to world peace, more demanding of a unified response, than the activities of one member of the United Nations, North Korea, breaking its Treaty obligations, ignoring the will of this Council, and making blood-curdling threats to inflict grievous harm on peoples of other countries. For decades, North Korea has doggedly pursued the means to act on these threats.

In a nation whose entire GDP is about \$25 billion and where its people have over recent decades been exposed to terrible suffering, reduced to eating leaves and the bark of trees. The Pyongyang regime has devoted its energies to developing nuclear weapons and the missiles to convey them. Last year alone, North Korea tested two nuclear devices and more than 24 ballistic missiles. This year, we have witnessed more missile tests and I remind the Council that every one of those tests breaks seven UN Resolutions, stretching back to Resolution 1695, passed unanimously in 2006.

So we should reject, I am afraid, we should reject any claims of moral equivalence between North Korea's actions and the defensive and precautionary measures of other nations. The second, the latter, are legitimate; the first are not and, in spite of the strenuous efforts of some to obscure that distinction, that distinction cannot be ignored or elided.

So the United Kingdom believes it is vital for this Council to stand ready to take further significant measures to bring about a peaceful resolution. And sooner or later, the North Korean leadership must realise that their isolation not only holds back their own people – if the regime really cares about their own people – but also weakens their own grip on power.

This Council must be united in its demand that the present course cannot continue and Britain is proud today to have joined its allies to lead the enforcement of sanctions and seek a peaceful solution. We urge other partners with direct influence on North Korea to use their leverage to the full, with the aim of easing tensions and ensuring compliance with the expressed will of the UN.

There is a vital role for China and Russia, both of whom are neighbours of North Korea with influence on Pyongyang and, as permanent members of this Council. Special responsibility they have for preserving international peace and security. The UK calls on Russia and China and other Member States to use whatever influence they possess to restrain North Korea and guide its leaders towards a peaceful settlement.

Last year, this Council decided to toughen sanctions on North Korea,

including by restricting the regime's access to foreign currency. But the UN Panel of Experts has shown that not every Member State is fully enforcing those Resolutions. Most members of the UN have yet to obey the requirement in Resolution 2270 to submit a national report on their implementation of sanctions.

The UK believes that all member states should re-affirm their commitment to enforcing UN sanctions against North Korea. But, we also have no doubt that negotiations must, at some point, form part of the solution. But first, it is reasonable to expect North Korea to make verifiable progress towards meeting its obligations to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula. For as long as Pyongyang continues to defy this Council, the conditions will not be helpful for resuming the Six Party Talks – or negotiations in any other format.

While the most pressing threat is North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear ambitions, we must never forget the horrifying abuse the regime metes out to its own people, as documented in the UN Commission of Inquiry in 2014. This Council has discussed human rights in North Korea on previous occasions – and there should be no reticence about doing so. The UK fully supports the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in North Korea and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights both of whom perform the crucial task of investigating and recording these violations.

Britain stands alongside our allies in making clear that North Korea must obey the UN and halt its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, disarming in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Only then can this Council be assured of the peace and security of the region – and only then can the people of North Korea have the chance of a better future.

Thank you.