

**The 8th Republic of Korea/United Nations Joint Conference on Disarmament
and Non-Proliferation Issues**

**NPT 2010: Prospects for a New Era of Progress on Disarmament and Non-
Proliferation**

**Intervention on Iranian Nuclear Issues by Nick Low, Nuclear Issues Team
Leader, Counter Proliferation Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
United Kingdom**

Words of thanks to hosts.

Colleagues, I hope that you will forgive me for departing from the script that you have in front of you. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to say the latest report by Dr el-Baradei, which became available in the early hours of this morning, had given the Iranian nuclear programme a clean bill of health.

But I regret the reality is otherwise. Herewith, some of the key elements:

- The Director General is unable to verify that Iran's nuclear programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes. The report makes clear that Iran has not suspended its enrichment-related activities or its work on heavy water-related projects as required by the UN Security Council.
- Indeed the Director General states that Iran has now installed 8,692 centrifuges of which just under four thousand are operating – that's an increase of 384 since August – and has increased its stock of low enriched uranium to 1,763kgs by 255kgs since the summer.
- In August, the IAEA stated that there had been no engagement by Iran on the outstanding issues on the military dimension for well over a year. Last night's

report shows Iran has continued to ignore the IAEA's key questions over weaponisation activities. It states "the Agency is also still awaiting Iran's response to its repeated requests for access to persons, information and locations identified in the alleged studies documents" (for example over nuclear-related high explosive testing and missile re-entry vehicle studies).

Let's check that against the E3 +3 statement from March 2008, twenty months ago.

That spoke of "the international community's on-going serious concerns about the proliferation risks of the Iranian nuclear programme. ...Iran's continued failure to comply with its UN Security Council and IAEA Board requirements, in particular by expanding its enrichment-related activities. ...And the IAEA's serious concerns about the "alleged studies", which are critical to an assessment of a possible military dimension to Iran's nuclear programme."

Plus ça change...pas.

Last night's report also cover the IAEA's initial conclusions, following its inspection of the enrichment facility at Qom. Development of this site is in contravention of five UN Security Council Resolutions and the Agency makes clear that it is "inconsistent with Iran's obligations under the Subsidiary Arrangements of its Safeguards Agreement". These state that Iran must inform the Agency of new nuclear facilities at the time of the decision to construct. It is also 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. However the Agency makes clear that it has information that shows Iran started construction before that date. The Agency states that Iran's explanation about the purpose and the chronology of its design and construction requires further clarification.

Let's look at the Tehran Nuclear Research Reactor. Third time lucky?

Unfortunately not. Instead we have the same, all-too-familiar pattern of behaviour. The US, Russia and France have offered to provide fuel for the reactor using Iran's low enriched uranium. This would potentially reduce its low enriched uranium stockpile. Again the lack of serious Iranian engagement is very disappointing. The deal offers a fair, viable and transparent means of meeting Iran's needs. By refusing to take the offer seriously, Iran has once again shown its unwillingness to engage with the international community over the many concerns regarding its nuclear programme.

Let's briefly return to basics. Iran's closet nuclear programme of nearly twenty years first came to light in 2003. The IAEA subsequently required the Iranian Government to provide answers to a series of questions about the nature of that programme, to grant access to officials engaged in that programme, and to hand over documentation relating to that programme.

Countless IAEA reports later, five UN Security Council Resolutions later and the most difficult questions remain unanswered, access to the officials has been refused, the documentation likewise. Whichever way we look at it – and believe me we have looked at Iran's programme from every conceivable angle – I regret to say that it only makes sense in the context of developing military uses of nuclear technology.

Let's be absolutely clear. If Iran really does want a peaceful nuclear power programme, it can have it – as long as it doesn't contribute to nuclear weapons proliferation. It's a very simple point. Iran needs to show that it is serious.

What I want to do now is to look at the Iranian nuclear programme in the context of the NPT and next year's Review Conference. Because winning the intellectual argument and in particular refuting the Iranian narrative that the Iran dossier is somehow a cipher for an attempt to deprive developing countries of their right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy is a crucial challenge.

And at the heart of that challenge is re-energising the consensus that must underpin the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime if it is to be effective. This matters. Nuclear weapons and non proliferation are amongst the most

important global issues of our time. The choices we make now will have an enormous impact on the world that we leave to future generations. They will determine whether that legacy is a safer, more secure world for all, a world without nuclear weapons and with affordable, safe and secure peaceful nuclear energy for those who want it. Or whether we witness a new dark and dangerous nuclear era under the shadow of regional nuclear arms races and the menace of nuclear terrorism.

Until recently nuclear proliferation has had a very much lower profile than climate change, defeating poverty, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development. In fact getting the nuclear question right is central to all of them.

And, these linkages aside, we face a grave challenge to global peace and security through the spread of nuclear weapons. That is why it is so important that the international community addresses with urgency the threat of nuclear proliferation and ensures the security of nuclear materials. It is also why we put such a high tariff on raising awareness ahead of next May's Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

The records will show that around 130 countries attended the NPT Preparatory Committee in the spring. Sadly thirteen of the fourteen seats in front of where I sat were unoccupied throughout the two weeks of the meeting. That was not exceptional. Such empty spaces were all too common throughout the auditorium.

Having recently worked at an Embassy in Africa – and I exempt that country, which was represented and contributed throughout the PrepCom – I appreciate both the political and resource realities in much of the developing world. The immediate, here-and-now priorities are desertification and climate change, access to developed country markets, overcoming poverty, providing clean drinking water and universal primary education and tackling Aids/HIV. Nuclear weapons can seem an awfully remote threat. And many foreign ministries have just a handful of officials covering the vast waterfront of multilateral issues. Should we really expect them to engage in a serious way?

Raising awareness in the run-up to the Review Conference is essential. We do not believe that Iran speaks for the interests of the developing world. We want the great mainstream of the Non-Aligned Movement to engage and to agree a mandate for a balanced strengthening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the broader non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

September's UN Security Council Summit and Resolution 1887 have helped focus attention and delivered political momentum. All of us must now keep up the effort.

To that end, the United Kingdom is funding a series of workshops and outreach across Africa to raise awareness in the run-up to the Review Conference. This is not a propaganda exercise. As a Nuclear Weapon State, we expect to be asked tough questions. It's right and proper that we should be. We have also mainstreamed non-proliferation and disarmament into our daily diplomacy. Gordon Brown and David Miliband will discuss NPT with fifty-odd Commonwealth leaders, many from developing countries, at next week's Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Trinidad.

The key message is that no one, **no one**, wins from proliferation and that we have a real opportunity at the Review Conference to secure actions for the future which will pave the way towards a safer world for all.

Of course raising awareness is only half the job. We must also set out a compelling vision of a reinvigorated and strengthened NPT regime.

We must "go to school on" the lessons the DPRK and Iran dossiers offer.

The primary object of an efficient non-proliferation regime must of course be the prevention of nuclear proliferation. How are the interests of the international community served by a situation in which the Director General of the IAEA can complain, as he did in May, that in the absence of an Additional Protocol, the Agency's safeguards have little credibility? We need a mandate to strengthen the non-proliferation regime through improved safeguards, verification and compliance

measures. We must ensure the IAEA has the necessary authority and capacity to assure compliance with non-proliferation obligations. And improving the Agency's ability to detect safeguards violations must be complemented by giving potential violators the certainty that when caught they will pay a high price. That must include raising the cost of withdrawing from the Treaty in circumstances which jeopardise international peace and security.

Outside the NPT process Iran shows the importance of using financial and legal tools to better disrupt illicit proliferation networks. This will mean tightening controls on trans-shipment and strengthening restrictions on transfers of enrichment and reprocessing technology.

As Gordon Brown has said, to exercise leadership on non-proliferation, the Nuclear Weapon States must show the same moral and political leadership on disarmament. Iran continues to try to muddy the waters by claiming that it is the Nuclear Weapon States who are failing to comply.

The Review Conference must agree a clear and credible forward plan on nuclear disarmament. We accept that demonstrable progress on disarmament is vital to achieving international consensus on non-proliferation and that Nuclear Weapons States must continue to take credible steps that will command the confidence of all and contribute to a safer world for all.

US and Russian nuclear weapons comprise some 95% of the world's total stockpile. We warmly welcome the joint understanding between Presidents Obama and Medvedev to conclude a successor agreement to the START Treaty which expires in December. Such an agreement will be a major contribution to this shared endeavour and will help to build trust and pave the way for greater reductions.

We recognise that progress by the US and Russia needs to be complemented by efforts by other states with nuclear weapons to reduce and keep their deterrents to the minimum. As the Prime Minister said in New York, as a demonstration of that pledge, we aim, subject to technical analysis and progress in multilateral

negotiations, to reduce our submarine fleet from four boats to three when the next class of submarines enters into service in the mid-2020s.

[Since the end of the Cold War, the UK has reduced the explosive power of our nuclear forces by around 75%; reduced the number of operationally available warheads to fewer than 160; reduced the number of nuclear weapons delivery systems to just one, the submarine-based Trident system; our warheads are not targeted at any particular country; and they are at several days' notice to fire. We now possess only around 1% of the global nuclear warhead stockpile.]

An international legal framework which puts tighter, verified constraints on nuclear weapons will be an essential basis for progress towards creating a world without nuclear weapons.

We must continue to work for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We welcome President Obama's commitment to work for US ratification at the earliest practical date which will give invaluable new momentum to efforts to bring on board the other eight states whose ratifications are required for the treaty to enter into force.

Putting a global cap on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices will be vital to international disarmament efforts. We want an immediate start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. And we want to have all 65 States at the negotiating table in January 2010.

We must in particular challenge the Iranian narrative on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We believe the world cannot overcome the twin challenges of climate change and the security of energy supply necessary for sustainable development without a wider use of nuclear energy. We want the Review Conference to agree a mandate to promote and facilitate the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without compromising safety, security or non-proliferation.

There is no question of taking away States parties' rights to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Rather the debate should be on ensuring that the nuclear renaissance is accompanied by a culture of openness, transparency and confidence. If a country needs to look nervously over its shoulder at what its neighbour might be doing, we – as an international community – are getting it wrong.

Multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle have an important role to play. They should be non-discriminatory, financially attractive, voluntary, give a central role to the IAEA and not infringe the Article IV right. [Let supplier and customer countries work together to identify viable ways of ensuring safe and secure access for all NPT parties to the benefits of nuclear energy provided that they comply fully with their non-proliferation obligations.]

Over the coming months and beyond, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that the international community is intent on taking positive action across an entire range of nuclear issues. This will in turn have a positive impact on Iran and greatly shrink the political space around hardline elements in Tehran and those elsewhere who may be tempted to follow the same path.

May I conclude by thanking the Government of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations for this conference and your wonderful hospitality and all of you here for your past and continuing efforts to ensure the success of the Review Conference. Your continued engagement will be invaluable in the coming months.