



Anglo-Iranian relationship and Nuclear Issue

A presentation of British-Iran relationship in 21st Century

Main question to address

- What are UK's objectives towards Iran and the wider region?
- What is UK's role among the western bloc in the JCPOA?
- To what extent does UK aligned with the U.S. and EU. What is the influence of Brexit and Trump's withdrawal on Anglo-Iranian relationship and JCPOA?

UK's regional partnership

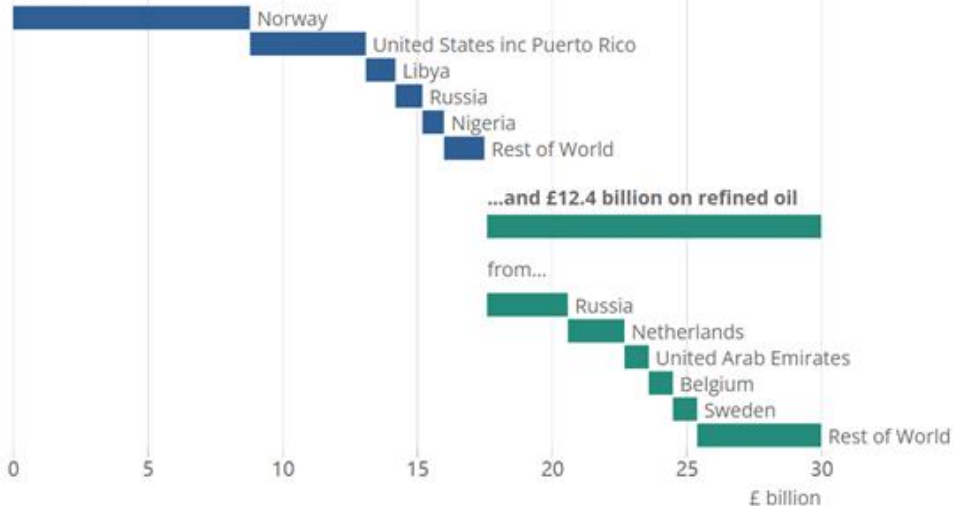
1. The Anglo-America special relationship
2. GCC countries especially with UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia (not that much)

Oil imports

UK oil imports totalled £30.0 billion in 2021

Of which, £17.6 billion was on crude oil

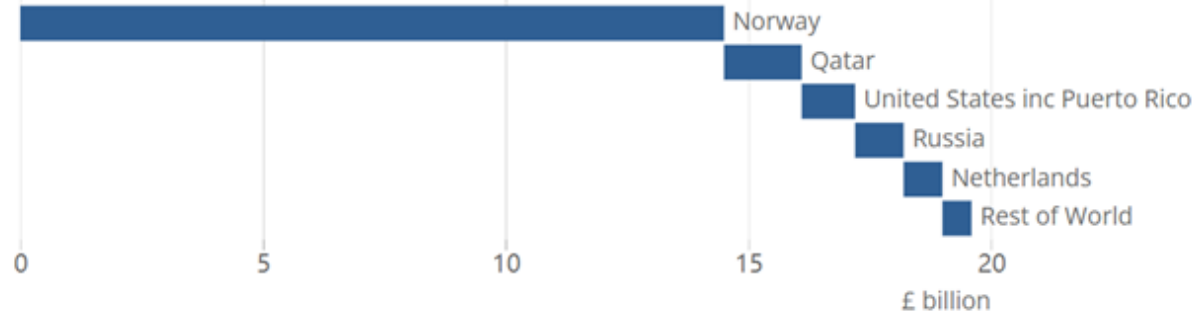
from...



Gas imports

UK gas imports totalled £19.6 billion in 2021

from...



UK's mindset for international strategy and foreign policies:

[...] global competition is [...] a battle between competing visions and mindsets. Autocracies are increasingly challenging the rules and norms that have, for decades, regulated international exchange. As competition intensifies, it will fall on democratic nations to uphold the central tenets of the rules-based international system, including democracy, human rights, and free trade.



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

Global Britain

Sixth Report of Session 2017–19

UK's objectives in Iran

- In the most general terms, the UK's interests in any foreign state are to establish relation which:
 - Help to guarantee the security of the UK;
 - Promote the UK's prosperity by enhancing trade and investment opportunities for British firms; and
 - Promote the UK's values through dissemination of its culture, language, educational opportunities and standards of human rights.
- In 2014 July
 1. Promote greater regional stability and security through reduction of threat from Iran to the UK's partners in the region.
 2. Open the way to greater diversity in energy and hydrocarbon supplies.
 3. Protect UK commercial interests in the wider region, particularly in the Gulf.
 4. Enable the development of the UK's commercial interests in Iran.
 5. Bring about improvements in human rights standards in Iran.
 6. Build cultural and educational links which allow Iranians to see directly what the UK has to offer, and vice versa.



UK and Iran Nuclear Issue: A brief introduction

1. 2003–2005 E3 (France, Germany and United Kingdom) and the negotiation on nuclear issues.
2. 2005 UK's veto under U.S. pressure and the failure of E3 forum.

The trade between UK and Iran declined significantly

Trade in Goods (Exports to Iran) - Bilateral Trade Figures: € Million - Source: Eurostat

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
EU 27	11290	10121.8	11338.6	10429.2	11312.2	10494.2	7358.8	5438
Germany	4110.5	3595.8	3920.3	3782.5	3786.4	3082.2	2523.7	1849
France	1896.1	1511.7	1810.2	1446.8	1786.9	670	803.2	494
UK	628.4	579.4	508.6	414.9	327.2	203.5	119.6	89.4
Italy	1825.2	1856.3	2125.5	2013.3	2059	1863.3	1407.2	1055.2
US (€)	65.1	99.1	490.8	195.6	157.7	180	190.5	227.1
US (\$)	85.9	144.7	683.2	280.4	211.4	233.2	251.1	312.8

Sources: Eurostat, United States Census Bureau

Exchange rate \$ to € correct for 31st December of the year in question (source: X-rates)

Compiled by [British-Iran Chamber of Commerce](#)

UK and Iran Nuclear Issue: A brief introduction

3. The 2011 new sanction regime and the storm of UK embassy in Tehran

4. When it comes to the Rohani presidency, E3 welcome a new agreement on nuclear issues

“The UK is committed to negotiating a peaceful diplomatic settlement that gives the world confidence that Iran’s nuclear programme is for purely peaceful purposes. We hope that following the election of President Rouhani Iran will engage constructively with the E3+3 and reach a negotiated settlement with the international community on the nuclear issue. We welcome President Rouhani’s positive comments on improving relations with the West and willingness to engage on the nuclear file. However, we need to see actions, not just words. If Iran is ready to take up the opportunity of a new relationship with the international community, we are ready to respond in good faith.”



UK's role in the JCPOA negotiation

Mr Kessler, representing the Henry Jackson Society, told us (with a hint of regret) that the UK had essentially “toed the Obama Administration’s line on Iran, on engagement”, and that it had been France which had taken the toughest position, insisting on concessions from Iran before the Joint Plan of Action was finally agreed. He suggested that “perhaps a worse Joint Plan of Action would have been drafted if not for French intervention”.⁹⁶ When we asked the Foreign Secretary about the measure of the UK’s independence from US policy towards Iran, he stressed that policy on Iran could not succeed without strong international co-ordination and unity, and he believed that if European policy were to be

UK's position after Brexit and Trump's withdrawal: A middle ground

- Eclecticism has always been a characteristic of the British
- Align with France and Germany and try to restore the agreement
- INSTEX

Iran's nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action: E3 statement, November 2022

France, Germany and the UK (E3) gave a joint statement to the IAEA Board of Governors on Iran's implementation of its nuclear commitments under the JCPoA.

From: [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#)

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UK's position after Brexit and Trump's withdrawal: A middle ground

A harder line with sanctions and military deterrence

For example, in 2019 Iran seized a UK oil tanker in Strait of Hormuz. Then Royal Navy sent ship to escort British ships in the region.

The New York Times

U.K. Warns Iran of 'Serious Consequences' for Seizing Oil Tanker

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Iran's Revolutionary Guard has released footage appearing to show the takeover of a British-flagged oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz. Britain's foreign secretary said the ship must be released. Reuters

Conclusion

1. UK is aware of the problematic relationship between UK and Iran and recognized that the problem lies both in history (for example the Oil Concession and 1953 Coup) and lack of mutual knowledge between UK and Islamic Republic of Iran. A UK paper points out that “UK has been regarded as a villain for over a century by Iranians”.
2. The Anglo-Iranian relationship reached a peak point in the period of 2013-2016. A policy paper shows significant concern about re-establishing diplomatic relationships and boost mutual understanding. However, after the “bankrupt” of JCPOA and later intensify of regional conflict, UK diverted to harder line regarding Iran.
3. On the nuclear issue, UK has always been in the line with France and Germany. However, because of the lack of leverage against US, UK knows that an agreement without US could hardly be carried out. Its plan was still trying to bridge the U.S. and EU on the nuclear issue. Some policy paper also pointed out that after the Brexit, there has been more fluctuation on UK’s Middle East diplomacy, which is a reflection of the instability within the conservative party. Theresa May is more in line with EU on many issues while Johnson prefers to follow the U.S. It is also true for the Iran nuclear issue.
4. UK has a strong commitment to human rights, international law and regional stability. And Iran has always been in the accusation of violating human rights and international law, threatening the regional peace and stability. And we can see from the policy paper that ignoring human rights issues in exchange for a better Anglo-Iranian relationship is not on British plan. In contrast, Iran is also firmly defended itself against the Western accusation and interference on domestic affairs. As long as this dispute exist, even if the nuclear issue can be fixed, it is hardly that the UK and Iran can establish a long-term stable relationship.