

Speech: “The Russian State was responsible for the attempted murder...and for threatening the lives of other British citizens in Salisbury.”

Thank you Mr President.

And thank you for arranging this urgent meeting of the of the Security Council today to give the UK the opportunity to update Council colleagues on our investigation into a nerve agent attack in Salisbury.

On Sunday 4 March, Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were found in the town centre slipping out of consciousness on a public bench and were taken to hospital by our emergency services, where they remain in a very serious condition.

Investigations by world-leading experts at the Defence, Science and Technology laboratory at Porton Down, accredited by the OPCW, discovered that they had been exposed to a nerve agent. British Police Officer Nick Bailey, was also exposed and remains in hospital in a serious condition. Hundreds of British citizens have been potentially exposed to this nerve agent in what was an indiscriminate and reckless act against the United Kingdom. We have deployed our military to secure and decontaminate numerous sites. The police continue an exhaustive, wide-scale investigation. Through those investigations, we have concluded that Mr Skripal and his daughter were poisoned with a “Novichok”, a military grade nerve agent of a type developed by Russia.

It is not a weapon which can be manufactured by non-state actors. It is so dangerous that it requires the highest-grade state laboratories and expertise. Based on the knowledge that Russia has previously produced this agent and combined with Russia’s record of conducting state sponsored assassinations – including against former intelligence officers whom they regard as legitimate targets – the UK Government concluded that it was highly likely that Russia was responsible for this reckless act.

We saw only two plausible explanations: either it was a direct attack by Russia on my country; or Russia had lost control of a military-grade nerve agent which they had developed. We requested the Russian Government provide an explanation by the end of Tuesday 13 March on how this Russian-produced nerve agent could have been deployed in Salisbury. They provided no credible explanation which could suggest they lost control of their nerve agent.

Mr President, we therefore have no alternative but to conclude that the Russian State was responsible for the attempted murder of Mr Skripal and his

daughter, and Police Officer Nick Bailey, and for threatening the lives of other British citizens in Salisbury.

Mr President, this was no common crime. It was an unlawful use of force – a violation of article two of the United Nations charter, the basis of the international legal order.

Mr President, the UK is proud to have been one of the states who played an integral role in drafting the Chemical Weapons Convention, a landmark piece of international law. We are therefore dismayed that Russia suggested that our response fails to meet the requirements of the convention. Article 7 of the Convention calls on the State Parties to implement the convention under their own legislation. The United Kingdom has enacted the Chemical Weapons Act in order to fully comply with this obligation. That legislation, together with relevant criminal law, is now guiding our investigation into this incident, as the convention was designed.

This was an attack on UK soil. Under the convention, we have the right to lead our response, engaging the OPCW and others as appropriate. On 8 March the UK formally notified the OPCW Technical Secretariat that a chemical attack had taken place on UK soil. The Russian Federation has complained that we are not using article 9 of the Convention. On the contrary, on 12 March, once it became clear to us that the United Kingdom had been attacked, my Foreign Secretary summoned the Russian Ambassador and sought an explanation from his government, as article 9 is clear we have the right to do. We have received no meaningful response. It is therefore Russia which is failing to comply with the provisions of the convention and this Council should not fall for their attempts to muddy the waters. In addition the UK has welcomed the offer of technical assistance from the Director General of the OPCW and we have invited the Technical Secretariat to independently verify our analysis. We are making every effort to expedite this process.

Mr President, let us now turn to the part of the Chemical Weapons convention which Russia not talking about. The part which requires State Parties to declare chemical weapons stockpiles and facilities which have been used at any time since 1946 to produce chemical weapons. Chemical weapons were to be verifiably destroyed and production facilities destroyed or converted subject to approval, within ten years of entry into force of the Convention. Russia completed destruction of its declared stockpile in September 2017 – ten years later than required by the Convention and five years beyond the single five year extension period.

Russia did not declare Novichok agents or production facilities associated with them as it was required to do under the Convention. No development facilities were declared. Yet we know from testimony by the Russian scientist Vil Mirzanayov that Novichoks were developed as part of the Soviet Union's offensive chemical warfare programme and inherited by the Russian Federation. Such facilities associated with that programme should have been declared under the CWC. Even today, a Russian politician has said that Russia has destroyed the Novichok nerve gas.

Mr President, from all of this we can conclude that Russia is in serious

breach of the Chemical Weapons convention through its failure to declare the Novichok programme. This fact alone means you should discount any arguments you hear from them about the possibility of other countries having inherited this technology. Had Russia declared and destroyed their own programme, there might have been some truth to this.

Mr President, on 4 March a weapon so horrific that it is banned from use in war was used in a peaceful city in my country. This was a reckless act carried out by people who disregard the sanctity of human life, who are indifferent to whether innocents are caught up in their attacks. They either did not care that the weapon used would be traced back to them, or mistakenly believed that they could cover their traces. Russian officials and media channels have repeatedly threatened those they consider traitors, even after the 4 March attacks.

Russia has a history of state-sponsored assassinations, including that of Alexander Litvinienko, poisoned by radioactive materials in my country a decade ago.

Russia has a history of interfering in other countries, whether the botched coup in Montenegro, repeated cyber-attacks on other states or seeking to influence others' democratic processes.

Russia has a history of flouting international law, most egregiously in Crimea, Eastern Ukraine and Georgia.

Russia shows disregard for civilian life, we all remember flight MH17 shot down by Russian proxies, supplied with Russian weapons.

And Russia has shown in its repeated protection of Asad's chemical weapons use that it has different standards when it comes to the use of these terrible substances.

We have not jumped to conclusions. We have carried out a thorough, careful investigation, which continues. We are asking the OPCW to independently verify the nerve agent used. We have offered Russia the chance to explain. But Russia has refused.

We have therefore concluded that the Russian state was involved and we have taken certain measures in response. In taking these measures we have been clear that we have no disagreement with the people of Russia who have been responsible for so many great achievements throughout history. It is the reckless acts of their Government which we oppose.

Mr President, we are grateful for the support of so many countries around the world. We will come back to the Council as the investigations make more progress and continue to keep you informed.

We have already heard the attacks and threats Russia has made over the past few days. We know that there will be more to come. This is how Russia has acted in every other case where it has been caught flouting international law: denial, distraction and threats. It is what Russia does.

But we will not let such threats deter us. We will not weaken our resolve. We will stand firm, confident in our democracy, our rule of law and the freedom of our people. We will stand by the values which are shared by the overwhelming majority of those in this Council, in this United Nations. And we ask you today to stand by us.

Thank you.

Press release: PM call with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: 14 March 2018

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada this evening to discuss the incident in Salisbury and the actions that the UK government is taking against Russia in response.

“Prime Minister May said the use of a military grade nerve agent on British soil was a reckless and shocking act.

“She thanked Prime Minister Trudeau for the strong message of support from Canada in recent days. He said that Canada would continue to stand squarely with the UK.

“They agreed on the importance of the international community showing solidarity at this time, and demonstrating a collective commitment to hold Russia to account for its unacceptable pattern of behaviour.”

Press release: Anglian Water pays £50,000 after water pollution incident

Anglian Water has agreed to pay £50,000 to an environmental charity after a manhole overflowed with black sludge and grey liquid into a watercourse in Bedfordshire due to a blocked sewer.

An enforcement undertaking (EU) has been agreed with the water company, which has donated £50,000 to the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.

The Environment Agency accepted the offer by the water company to put right any damage caused by the pollution and to donate to an environmental charity.

The money is to benefit the local environment of Nene Valley and Ouse Valley Living Landscape areas. Anglian Water also paid back the Environment Agency's costs of £3,451.

Chris Tate, Environment Agency Team Leader, said:

Enforcement undertakings allow those who commit offences to restore the environment and to take steps to prevent a recurrence.

When appropriate, they allow a quicker resolution than a prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to put things right voluntarily working with their local communities.

Due to the pollution, which raised ammonia levels in the watercourse at Highfield Farm near Ravensden, the incident was classified as a category 2 by the Environment Agency.

The blockage in the sewer was in the branch from Yarlswood Immigration Centre and included single-use shampoo sachets which the immigration centre provided for its residents. There had been six blockages on the same stretch of sewer since 2011 when the sewer was transferred to AWS. It was not mapped onto the company's mapping system until after this incident in June 2015.

Practices for checking the sewer and at the immigration centre have since changed.

Press release: PM meeting with Prime Minister Xavier Bettel of Luxembourg: 14 March 2018

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

"Prime Minister Theresa May hosted Prime Minister Xavier Bettel of Luxembourg for a meeting at Downing Street this afternoon.

"Prime Minister May began by providing an update on the Salisbury attack following her statement to Parliament earlier today and welcomed the strong support received from leaders across Europe. Prime Minister Bettel condemned the attack and those responsible.

“The leaders discussed the Mansion House speech and the Prime Minister’s vision for an ambitious future partnership with the EU after Brexit, building on the deep security relationship and economic ties the UK and EU have created together over the years.

“On Northern Ireland, the Prime Minister restated her commitment to the Belfast Agreement, to no hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland and to preserving the integrity of the UK’s own common market. She highlighted that officials from the Irish government, the European Commission and the UK are meeting to discuss practical solutions.

“Finally, they looked ahead to the March European Council next week. Prime Minister May noted the importance of reaching an agreement on the implementation period in order to provide the certainty to businesses and people across the EU and the UK.”

[Speech: Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons 87th Executive Council session: 14 March update on the use of nerve agent in Salisbury, UK](#)

Mr Chair, Director General, when I spoke to this Council yesterday I asked your permission to address this Council Session again to update on developments concerning the use of chemical weapons in Salisbury, and the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal with a ‘Novichok’: a military-grade nerve agent developed by Russia. Based on this capability, combined with Russia’s record of conducting state sponsored assassinations – including against former intelligence officers who they regard as legitimate targets – the UK government concluded that it was highly likely that Russia was responsible for this reckless and despicable act.

We have engaged bilaterally with the Russian Federation. On 12 March my Foreign Secretary summoned the Russian Ambassador to London and sought explanations from his government within 24 hours. [As my Prime Minister has said](#), we offered the Russian government the opportunity to provide an explanation. We explained to Russia that if it had somehow lost control of its stock, it needed to immediately provide full disclosure of the programme, and account for this loss. But their response has demonstrated complete disdain for the gravity of these events.

Russia has provided no explanation; and no meaningful response.

No explanation as to how this agent came to be used in the United Kingdom; no explanation as to why Russia has an undeclared chemical weapons programme contravening its obligations under the chemical weapons convention.

Instead they have treated the first ever aggressive use of a nerve agent in Europe with sarcasm, contempt and defiance.

As my [Prime Minister said in the United Kingdom's Parliament this afternoon](#), there can be no alternative conclusion other than that the Russian State was culpable for the attempted murder of Mr Skripal and his daughter – and for threatening the lives of other British citizens in Salisbury, including Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey. This represents an unlawful use of force by the Russian State against the United Kingdom.

It also represents a violation of the fundamental prohibition on the use of chemical weapons contained in [Article 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention](#).

Russia's attempt to hide behind a false interpretation of Articles in the Chemical Weapons Convention should fool no one. We asked for clarification on a matter of urgent national security for the United Kingdom, concerning a serious violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Russia has provided none. Instead of engaging on the substantive concern, Russia has sought to mire us and this Executive Council in procedural argument. Article 9 does not oblige states which are the victims of chemical weapons to refrain from seeking rapid response to their immediate and urgent concerns. Not only that, as you have all heard in this room yesterday, the Russians have stated that they regard the premise of our question – the findings of our investigation to date – as based on lies.

We have also been scrupulous in briefing the [OPCW Technical Secretariat](#). On 8 March we notified the Technical Secretariat of the incident. My Foreign Secretary called the Director General on 12 March to update him on the facts of the case. I have briefed the Director General, most recently today, and my Prime Minister is writing to him with a further update. We have welcomed the offers of assistance from the Director General and the Technical Secretariat. And, as my Prime Minister said in the UK Parliament earlier today, we are working with the police to enable the OPCW to independently verify our analysis. This horrendous incident is now the subject of a UK criminal investigation, and we have legal obligations as a result to ensure that we share our information only in accordance with the law.

Russia will complain that we have not shared any samples. There are no provisions in the Convention that require the UK to share its samples collected as part of a criminal investigation with Russia in this type of scenario.

Mr Chair, British citizens have been endangered. It was an indiscriminate, brazen and reckless act against the United Kingdom, which put the lives of British citizens at risk. There is a real urgency to resolve this situation.

Given what Russia said in this Council yesterday – that our case was founded on lies and dirty information – it is clear that Russia does not plan to

address our substantive concerns.

Mr Chair, nobody can doubt our commitment to the CWC, particularly at a time when there has been a use of chemical weapons on our territory against our citizens. We will continue to work with the Technical Secretariat, and will keep this Council informed of developments.