



**United Kingdom
Permanent Representation
to the
Conference on Disarmament**

**UK General Statement
to the 2009 Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee**

**by
Ambassador John Duncan**

Ambassador for Multilateral Arms Control and Disarmament

NEW YORK, 4 May 2009

Please check against delivery

The United Kingdom thanks the Czech Republic for its statement on behalf of the European Union, which it endorses and supports. I also congratulate you, Mr. Chairman on your appointment and assure you of our support in your efforts to ensure a successful outcome to this Preparatory Committee.

I would now like to add some remarks on behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom.

Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister, last summer described nuclear weapons as “One of the big issues” of our time. In media and public eyes it has perhaps had less exposure than the climate change, the global financial crisis, global poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, or international security and the threats posed by regional conflicts and terrorism.

But not only is the nuclear question as pressing as these other issues, it is also intimately and intrinsically linked with them. And it requires the same concerted and determined international response. We cannot afford to be complacent.

Creating a low-carbon global economy and understanding and mastering the huge and complex forces behind the world’s economic crisis pose new and demanding questions of the international community. These are untrodden paths. We must also come up with new answers to ensure that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime can meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty provides, a set of principles and a framework that have served us well over the last forty years. Our collective task is to refresh and renew the grand bargain at its heart and to re-energise the commitment of the entire international community to stopping proliferation, to realizing the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy, and to delivering the NPT’s ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

We need to build a global coalition around not only a shared vision of a world free from nuclear weapons but also of how we are going to work together to make it happen. As David Miliband, the British Foreign Secretary, has said, we must find common cause and move from a decade of deadlock to a decade of decision.

The United Kingdom set out its vision for a re-invigorated non-proliferation regime and of a world without nuclear weapons at the beginning of this review cycle in the spring of 2007. Two years on the Prime Minister last month committed the UK to a renewed push. The time is right. We warmly welcome the commitment, energy and leadership President Obama has brought to this issue and the agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation to conclude a legally binding successor to the START Treaty

Creating the conditions for success at next year’s Review Conference is however a shared responsibility which requires action by all states. In this it is therefore particularly important that all states, comply with their international nuclear non-proliferation obligations, especially when these have been reinforced by United Nations Security Council Resolutions

The United Kingdom will play its full part, including by the publication in the summer of the "Road to 2010" plan announced by the British Prime Minister in March. We hope that this will identify the areas of convergence around which we might build consensus in strengthening the NPT and the broader non-proliferation and disarmament architecture in twelve months' time.

Mr. Chairman, I will touch on these proposals in more detail in the United Kingdom's cluster statements later this week.