

**2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear
Weapons: New York, 27 April – 22 May 2015
Main Committee I
Statement by Mr. Guy Pollard MBE
Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom
to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mr Chairman,

At the outset the United Kingdom would like to align itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union.

Mr Chairman,

The UK has made a strong contribution to the overall reductions in the global stockpile of all types of nuclear weapons. In the late 1970s, when the UK's stockpile was at its highest, the UK had approximately 460 warheads in-service across five types. Since the end of the Cold War, the UK has steadily reduced the size of its nuclear forces and since 1998, has reduced to a single platform, a single delivery system and a single design of warhead.

In January we announced that the commitments made following the 2010 Review Conference to reduce the number of operationally available warheads had been implemented across the submarine fleet. We have reduced the number of warheads on each of our deployed ballistic missile submarines from 48 to 40, and the number of operational missiles on each of those submarines to no more than eight.

This takes our total number of operationally available warheads to no more than 120. This will enable us to reduce our overall nuclear warhead stockpile to not more than 180 by the mid 2020s.

The UK also has a strong record of reducing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in our defence and security policy. The UK views its nuclear weapons as a strategic deterrent - they are political, not military weapons. We would employ nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including the defence of our NATO Allies, and would not use any of our weapons contrary to international law.

UK nuclear weapons are not on high alert, nor are they on a "launch on warning" status. The patrol submarine operates routinely at a "notice to fire" measured in days, rather than in minutes, which was the case during the Cold War. Since May 1994, patrol submarines' missiles have been de-targeted.

In support of transparency on all issues relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we issued in 2014, a report in response to the call in Action 5 of the 2010 Action plan. We sought feedback from civil-society and non-nuclear weapon states, in the light of which we released a revised version in February.

Check against delivery

Mr Chairman,

We recognise the role that Negative Security Assurances can play in strengthening the NPT regime. That was why we gave a revised assurance during this review cycle that “the UK will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states parties to the NPT”. In giving this assurance, we emphasise the need for universal adherence to the NPT and note that this assurance would not apply to any state in material breach of their non-proliferation obligations.

By ratifying protocols to the existing treaties on nuclear weapon free zones, the UK has given assurances to around 100 countries covering much of the globe including regions as diverse as Africa, Latin America and the Pacific. We are pleased to have signed and ratified the Protocol to the Central Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty in the last twelve months.

Further progress on NWFZs will provide credible, regional, internationally binding legal instruments on negative security assurances which many are looking for. We will continue to engage with State Parties to the SEANWFZ Treaty in order to facilitate signature of the relevant Protocol in the near future.

Mr Chairman,

The UK was among the first States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We have maintained a voluntary moratorium on nuclear test explosions since 1991. We now provide extensive technical, financial and expert support to the three pillars of the CTBTO’s verification system. We oppose calls from some states to cut funding to the CTBTO’s technical organs. We have actively engaged in EU and P5 work streams aimed at improving the International Monitoring System and regularly sponsor projects in support of the CTBTO. A recent example is a successful workshop providing training on using new open sources tools and technologies for verification purposes. The UK played an active role in Integrated Field Exercise 2014 (IFE 14) providing a significant amount of equipment and technical expertise to the exercise. We believe that IFE 14 has demonstrated a step change in the CTBTO’s On Site Inspection capability.

The UK announced in 1995 that it had ceased the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. All facilities used for the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in the UK have either been decommissioned, or are undergoing decommissioning, or are now used for peaceful purposes only.

All enrichment and reprocessing in the UK since 1995 has been conducted under Euratom safeguards and the terms of the UK/Euratom/IAEA Safeguards Agreement, and all civil nuclear material in the UK is subject to these arrangements. In 1998 the UK placed nuclear material excess to defence requirements under international safeguards.

The UK sees the start and early conclusion of negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices as an essential step on the road to complete global nuclear disarmament.

Check against delivery

The negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, in the Conference on Disarmament, further to the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work, is a priority for us. In this regard, we are pleased the Group of Government Experts established on this issue was able to produce a substantive report and commend the efforts of Ambassador Golberg for her chairing of the Group.

Mr Chairman

Verification is likely to play an increasing and crucial role in disarmament measures. The UK is a world leader on research into developing verification capabilities of warhead dismantlement, on which the UK-Norway Initiative, the first and only such established project between an NWS and an NNWS, continues to make progress. We will host two side events on this work on 4 and 7 May. The UK also has a long-running bilateral verification research programme with the US able to focus on different aspects of verification than the UKNI work. It will also be the subject of a side event on 11 May. The UK will continue its work on disarmament verification during the next Review Cycle, including within the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification recently established by the United States.

In 2009, the UK established the 'P5 Process' to discuss disarmament issues. The P5 process serves two purposes – to build trust and confidence between P5 members and to build trust and confidence between the P5 and the rest of the world that the P5 are working together to take forward their disarmament commitments. We were very pleased that the P5 London Conference in February included a session with NNWS for the first time.

During this review cycle, the Process has enabled the P5 to report on progress against these commitments in a common format for the first time. The UK is committed to maintaining this level of transparency, and we anticipate reporting to the NPT States Parties during the next Review Cycle, in line with Action 21. The production of a Glossary has established a useful working method for the P5; with this in place we hope that the P5 can go on to discuss definitions of more difficult terms related to disarmament and strategic stability.

The very process of the P5 discussing these difficult issues has made an important start to improving mutual transparency between the P5. We believe the P5 Process is key to finding realistic and sustainable ways forward on multilateral disarmament. The United Kingdom will retain a credible and effective minimum nuclear deterrent for as long as the global security situation makes it necessary. However we remain committed to our obligations under Article VI and have made significant reductions to our nuclear weapons. The UK will remain at the forefront of global efforts to pursue a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you Mr Chairman.