



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

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

**by
Ambassador John Duncan**

Ambassador for Multilateral Arms Control and Disarmament

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Please check against delivery

Mr Chairman

We are a year away from the final and critical stage of our five-year review of the NPT. Our shared task is to ensure this is the end of a period which has been referred to as the Decade of Deadlock, a time when we have seen this and other international arrangements in the field of multilateral arms control and disarmament put under great strain. Despite the challenges, our common endeavour can, and must, see the dawn of a Decade of Decisions and Progress. It is more important than ever before that we work to uphold, strengthen and re-energise the NPT, which is the cornerstone of our collective effort to deal with the very real threat of nuclear proliferation and our compass towards our ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Whilst frustration at the challenges of this enterprise is understandable, what is less understandable is the deliberate misrepresentation of what has been achieved to date and the failure by some to recognise and respond to the political wind of change that has occurred outside the narrow confines of the arms control and disarmament community.

As I explained in the United Kingdom's general statement, we share the commitment of many in this room to strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the broader non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. This requires all States Party to take action to meet their obligations under all three pillars of the NPT.

Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. They are two sides of the same coin. If we fail in one, it will gravely undermine progress in the other. The road to a world free from nuclear weapons does not lie through the emergence of new nuclear-armed states. This would be a huge setback for nuclear disarmament and a body blow to international security. Equally, as the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said on 17 March "let me be clear, we are not asking Non-Nuclear Weapon States to refrain from proliferation while Nuclear Weapon States amass new weapons; we are asking them not to proliferate while Nuclear Weapon States take the steps to reduce their own arsenals in line with the Non-Proliferation Treaty's requirements.

The United Kingdom is committed to the ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. We warmly welcome the fact that other Nuclear Weapon States have made clear their determination to achieve the same objective and have made deep cuts in their nuclear arsenals. The Nuclear Weapon States can only exercise moral and political leadership in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons if they demonstrate the same leadership on the question of disarmament.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues

As we approach the 2010 Review Conference, as many have said this week, we need to refresh and renew the grand global bargain that is at the heart of

the NPT. The objective we all seek of a world free from nuclear weapons has always been recognised as being difficult and challenging. It is a path of steps, not a single leap. But with each step we must aim to build confidence that action to prevent proliferation is working and that states with nuclear weapons are making strides to live up to their commitments.

It has been disappointing to hear at this stage in our discussions some delegations assert that the Nuclear Weapon States are not meeting their side of the NPT bargain. Questions about the extent and speed with which parties are meeting their commitments under this pillar are legitimate, as they are about the extent to which Non Nuclear Weapon States are meeting the requirements to guard against proliferation risks. The NPT is a bargain with rights and obligations on both sides. But there has been significant progress in nuclear disarmament over the last 20 years. To pretend otherwise is to fail to look at the facts.

Britain has a strong record of fulfilling its obligations under Article VI. Since the end of the cold war, we have reduced the explosive power of our arsenal by 75%; we have reduced our number of operationally available nuclear warheads to fewer than 160; we have reduced the number of nuclear weapons systems to just one. The alert status of all our weapons is held on several days' notice to fire and they are not targeted at any country. As a responsible nuclear power, the UK is committed to maintaining a minimum, safe and effective nuclear deterrent. We keep the size of our arsenal under constant review, and as the Prime Minister made clear, when it will be useful to do so, Britain will be ready to include our small arsenal in any future multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

We are equally committed to a policy of transparency. We have produced historical records of our defence holdings of both plutonium and highly enriched uranium. We ceased production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons in 1995. All excess fissile material stocks declared as surplus to defence requirements have been placed under international safeguards and we no longer exercise our right as a Nuclear-Weapon State to withdraw from such stocks for use in nuclear weapons. We have not conducted a test nuclear explosion since 1991 and we ratified the CTBT in 1998.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues

In February, David Miliband the Foreign Secretary launched a paper, "Lifting the Nuclear Shadow" which sets out the UK's strategy for creating the conditions for abolishing nuclear weapons. In it he laid out in detail the conditions and the steps that we believe need to be taken by the international community to bring about nuclear disarmament. The UK sees six key steps as necessary to move the world towards the abolition of nuclear weapons:

- Bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty into force. We warmly welcome the announcement by President Obama that he will work for early ratification of the Treaty by the US Senate. We strongly urge other countries, especially Annex II countries, to do likewise;

- US/Russia negotiations and agreement on substantial further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. Again we very much welcome the announcement of negotiations on a legally binding successor to the START Treaty with the aim of reaching agreement before the end of this year;
- Stopping proliferation in those countries subject to UN Security Council resolutions and renewing agreement among all the NPT States Party that the way forward must include tougher measures to prevent proliferation;
- Multilateral negotiations on a Treaty to cut off the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. This is vital to help make reductions in nuclear weapons irreversible and to establish many of the mechanisms that would constitute the core of an eventual regime to oversee a global ban;
- Working for agreement on a new International Atomic Energy Agency-led system that would help states wishing to develop a nuclear energy industry do so without increasing the risks of nuclear weapon proliferation;
- Resolving the many technical, political, military and institutional problems that need to be overcome if the states that possess nuclear weapons are to reduce and ultimately eliminate their arsenals securely, and to prevent nuclear weapons from ever re-emerging. With this in mind, the UK has proposed hosting a conference for the five recognised Nuclear Weapons States this autumn to discuss verification, confidence building and voluntary transparency measures related to nuclear disarmament.

The UK's Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) is continuing its pioneering work into the key stages in the verification of the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. In December they completed their first practical trilateral joint exercise with the Norwegian Government and the verification NGO VERTIC on managed access to nuclear facilities. They will be conducting further joint exercises over the coming months. Later this week experts from AWE will report again to the PrepCom on the progress of their work.

As we continue to work towards nuclear disarmament, let me make very clear that the United Kingdom hears, understands and respects the desire of the Non-Nuclear Weapon States to receive multilateral guarantees from the Nuclear Weapon States that they will not be threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons. We remain firmly committed to the negative and positive security assurances that we have given the Non-Nuclear Weapon States in our letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations in 1995, which was subsequently noted in Security Council Resolution 984.

The United Kingdom believes that the best way of achieving the necessary guarantees sought by the Non-Nuclear Weapon States is through the Protocols annexed to Treaties creating Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones. We have given treaty-based negative security assurances to nearly one hundred countries and believe that our 1995 security assurances, and the Protocols to the Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaties that we have signed, offer Non-

Nuclear Weapon States the assurances that they seek. The most effective way to give further effect to the desires of the Non-Nuclear Weapon States is to make further progress with Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones, guided by the objectives and principles of the 1999 Guidelines of the UN Disarmament Commission. This will provide on a credible, regional basis the internationally binding legal instruments on negative security assurances, which are sought.

I will speak further on Nuclear Weapons Free Zones in our Cluster II statement and on the Middle East Resolution from the 1995 Review and Extension Conference in the debate of Regional Issues.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues

We do not, and must not, underestimate the challenges ahead but we are determined to work with those who share this collective vision to energise international diplomacy to make much-needed headway. The journey to a world free from nuclear weapons will most certainly not end at the 2010 Review Conference. But the reinvigoration of our common endeavour and establishment of a clear, credible and forward-looking roadmap towards that ultimate goal would be a crucial step forward. Between now and then all of us here must not only show our good intentions, but also our willingness to act.