

## **Non-proliferation and Disarmament: Achieving our Ultimate Goal**

Speech by **Lord Malloch Brown**, FCO Minister (Geneva, Friday 2 May)

*PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

In past months we have seen a marked shift in attitudes towards nuclear proliferation and disarmament. Already this year we have heard from Gordon Brown in Delhi that “we must send a powerful signal to all members of the international community that the race for more and bigger stockpiles of nuclear destruction is over”. We had heard a forceful call for a nuclear-free world from Messrs Kissinger, Nunn, Perry and Shultz. President Sarkozy has set out France’s intentions to cut its stockpile. And the message from the UN is promising too: Ban Ki-Moon stated at the recent Conference on Disarmament that “there is really no responsible alternative: the international community must work together and demonstrate its resolve to move from challenges and opportunities to concrete results.”

This sense of a reinvigorated international commitment to achieving the goals of the NPT is promising. But on the other hand, the NPT had nowhere to go but up. At the 2005 2000 + 5 summit in New York, all language on the NPT was omitted from the world leaders’ resolution because their diplomats could not agree on anything useful to say. We have the potential for a creeping nuclear arms race in the Middle East, at a time when progress on multilateral disarmament has been stalled.

This PrepCom offers us a valuable opportunity to take stock, and to confirm the beginnings of a comeback for the NPT. I’ll begin by looking at non-proliferation and disarmament, two of the NPT’s three pillars, and then move on to look at the challenges posed by the rise in nuclear energy.

### **Non-proliferation and disarmament**

#### **i. The NPT and the threat posed by proliferation**

First, non-proliferation. The NPT still remains the best vehicle for moving towards a nuclear weapons free world, but it is facing serious challenges. As is often said of the UN itself, for all its faults if we did not have it we would invent it. The first is for states parties to strengthen the NPT by living up to both the letter and the spirit of their respective obligations. In this context, we must continue our efforts to encourage adoption of the Additional Protocol, allowing for the kind of inspections of nuclear installations necessary to give states confidence in this international system. And we must continue our support for a more efficient and effective IAEA.

And our second challenge is to get non-signatories to the NPT on board. Their absence prevents the NPT being the universal instrument that the world needs, and we continue to call for these states to join as non-Nuclear Weapons States, both in public and privately. And it is no good hiding behind the fiction that the NPT works because the trouble makers are non-signatories. The NPT only works if it have global authority and legitimacy. There cannot be a free rider problem with nuclear weapons.

Our message must be that no-one wins from nuclear proliferation. And our policy towards states pursuing proliferation must be a tough one of “zero-tolerance” – expressed through effective dialogue and diplomacy - with Iran and North Korea at the forefront of our efforts.

It is imperative that North Korea complies with UNSCR 1718, shows the goodwill and courage to bring the Six-Party Talks process to a prompt and successful conclusion, and returns to its NPT obligations.

North Korea has attempted to explode a nuclear device. Iran has not. But as passage of UNSCR 1803 made clear, we have deep concerns that the Iranian nuclear programme might be used for non-peaceful purposes. Iran has failed to comply with the requirements set by the Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors. It won't let IAEA speak to named officials. It has ignored the tough questions about its past activities. And far from complying with the Security Council's requirement to suspend enrichment, it has installed new centrifuges. We do not seek to deny Iran its rights under the NPT – indeed we are ready to help Iran develop a civil nuclear energy programme. But first Iran must comply with its obligations. It can then be treated like other non-nuclear weapon States Party to the NPT.

And it is important to note too that Iranian compliance with its UN Security Council obligations, alongside speedier progress on the Middle East peace process, would be a huge step towards our commitment to a Middle East Zone free from Weapons of Mass Destruction.

## **ii. Disarmament**

But in order to meet the non-proliferation challenges to the NPT, we must also address concerns that the Nuclear Weapons States are not fulfilling their part of the bargain. The UK, for its part, has reduced the explosive power of its nuclear stockpile by 75% since the end of the Cold War. In just the last year we have reduced our stockpile of operationally available warheads by a further 20% to fewer than 160. We have reduced the number of nuclear weapons systems to just one. The US is on course to reduce its nuclear arsenal by 2012 to one quarter of its size at the end of the Cold War. France announced that it will reduce its arsenal to under 300 warheads. Russia too has reduced its stocks.

And we are seeing continued bilateral collaboration on arms control between Russia and the US. Their recent announcement that they will work towards a legally binding successor to the START Treaty gives ground for optimism. As the countries with the greatest stockpiles of weapons, we encourage US and Russia to go even further.

But there is more that can be done. The first logical step is a global cap on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and explosive devices. To this end, we are continuing to press for negotiations to start on a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty, without preconditions, in the Conference on Disarmament - and we will continue to urge those states that have not yet done so to join the consensus. Second, we should ban further explosive testing of nuclear weapons. And to this end I urge that all those states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT.

And key to taking these steps will be building confidence throughout the current NPT cycle. The UK is taking forward a number of innovative projects, including: the Atomic Weapons Establishment doing detailed technical work on the “nuts and bolts” of nuclear disarmament; our offer to host a conference of P5 nuclear laboratories on the technical aspects of verification; the Atomic Weapons Establishment developing a technical co-operation initiative with several Norwegian defence laboratories and the verification NGO “VERTIC”; and our support for a major study by the International Institute of Strategic Studies on the technical steps required to eliminate nuclear weapons. We will continue to work on further transparency measures. But above all like Messrs Kissinger et al, we must make it clear that the final point is a weapons free world with mutually verifiable complete disarmament. Not now, not soon perhaps – but one day.

### **Respecting the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy**

But let me turn now to the so-called “third pillar” and the growing demand for nuclear power for civil energy use. It is abundantly clear that concerns over the longer-term affordability and availability of fossil fuels, and the necessity to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, combined with growing energy needs in the Asian tigers and elsewhere, can only mean this demand will increase. And if, both individually and as the international community, we get it right, we can reap great benefits: cheaper energy, higher rates of growth, greater long-term security of supply and a real impact on carbon emissions.

And what is clear therefore is that internationally agreed energy regime is required to make this demand work. And that any internationally agreed system to ensure affordable, secure access to nuclear fuel will require and reinforce a central role for the IAEA. The UK strongly supports the right under Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes: this is why we have proposed the Enrichment Bond administered by the IAEA. And this is just one of a number of complementary ideas that have been put forward to support states’ rights to peaceful use of nuclear power under the NPT. Britain joined its URENCO partners, Germany and the Netherlands, in hosting a conference in Berlin on 17-18 April where suppliers and potential customers were able to discuss the issues. And we will hold a further international conference towards the end of the year. But we recognise that there is more work to be done. A successful 2010 Review Conference is important in order to move us forward.

An internationally agreed system to support states while addressing the proliferation challenges of nuclear power is a more pressing need than ever before. We must seize on the renewed enthusiasm for a nuclear weapons free world. We must re-double our efforts to strive to achieve this ultimate goal.