

**UK Statement
to the 2008 Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee
Cluster 2 – Non Proliferation
by
Ambassador John Duncan, Ambassador for Multilateral Arms Control and
Disarmament, Geneva, 5 May 2008**

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Mr Chairman

The United Kingdom fully supports the statement made by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union on the issues of relevance to Cluster II. We would like to add a few additional remarks on matters of particular importance to the United Kingdom.

Mr Chairman

In our statement to this session last year we commended the example set by Libya, which in 2003 renounced its clandestine programme to develop nuclear weapons and began to dismantle and destroy associated facilities and equipment. At the start of the previous decade the newly democratic South Africa disposed of the nuclear weapon capacity it had inherited from the previous government and signed the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state. The actions of both these countries did great service to the cause of international peace and security. The United Kingdom salutes them.

As we said in our opening remarks at this meeting, nuclear proliferation undermines not only the NPT but also collective security. It brings back the spectre of a nuclear arms race and de-stabilises the region concerned and beyond. The United Nations Security Council has voiced that concern on behalf of the international community in respect of two countries whose nuclear activities have cast a long shadow.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea exploded a nuclear device on 9 October 2006. In Resolution 1718 the UN Security Council expressed its gravest concern at the test explosion and deplored the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's announcement of withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The United Kingdom strongly supports the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, the goal of which is the verifiable and peaceful de-nuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. We fully support the Six Party Talks process and urge the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to meet its commitments under the 3 October Agreement.

The United Kingdom believes the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be bound by its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and calls on its Government to comply with them and with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1695 and 1718.

In March the Security Council agreed Resolution 1803, sending a message to the Government and people of Iran. It was the third time the UN has sent a strong message of international resolve to Iran by adopting a sanctions resolution under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It made clear the collective

concern of United Nations member states that Iran might be intending to use its nuclear programme for military purposes. The United Kingdom said at the time that it did not have confidence that Iran's programme was for exclusively peaceful purposes. And it remains our judgement that Iran's nuclear programme only makes sense as part of a plan to develop, at the least, a nuclear weapons capability.

Iran's task is to re-build confidence in its nuclear intentions. To suspend all enrichment-related and re-processing activity and work on all heavy water-related projects; to resolve all outstanding questions; and to bring into force its Additional Protocol. Iran has made progress with the IAEA. But that progress only addresses one of these issues, and then only partially. The IAEA still awaits answers to the most difficult questions about Iran's past programmes. And Iran has refused the IAEA's request to speak to named Iranian officials.

The United Kingdom strongly supports Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It recognises Iran's right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with its NPT obligations. And it remains committed to a negotiated solution based on the generous and far-reaching proposals that China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America agreed in Vienna in June 2006 and which, since that time, we have consistently urged Iran to accept. The United Kingdom greatly regrets that Iran has ignored that opportunity to transform its relationship with the international community and to develop a modern civil nuclear power industry with supplies of nuclear fuel that are legally guaranteed.

Mr Chairman

Events in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iraq in the first half of the 1990s showed the IAEA safeguards regime required strengthening. The United Kingdom believes the safeguards regime should be continuously reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose. The Agency must have access to, and make effective use of, the resources and tools necessary to ensure that the safeguards agreements are robustly verified. An effective and efficient safeguards system, properly policed, is an essential element of the international non-proliferation architecture.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the argument that a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with the additional protocol represent today's verification standard. We believe the universal adoption of integrated safeguards, particularly in states with significant nuclear activities, would make a major contribution to strengthening the IAEA's safeguards regime and international confidence and transparency. The conclusion of an additional protocol considerably enhances the effectiveness of the safeguards system. It enables the IAEA to verify that all nuclear material in a state is in peaceful use and enables the proper implementation of integrated safeguards.

The United Kingdom is firmly of the opinion that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's announcement of its intention to withdraw from the NPT revealed a serious weakness that we need to address. The United Kingdom believes the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-proclaimed exit from the Treaty to be invalid and that it remains bound by its NPT obligations. We are aware that others

accept that it is outside the NPT regime. We believe this highlights the need to clarify the consequences of withdrawal. The United Kingdom strongly supports the European Union paper on Article X of the Treaty, which it tabled last year to address this issue. We re-affirm our belief that, without in any way reopening the Treaty, we need to set out clear measures that make plain the extreme gravity of withdrawal and raise the cost for any State Party thinking of pulling out of the NPT.

The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the decision of the UN Security Council to renew [and extend] the mandate of the UNSCR 1540 Committee. We particularly commend the increased focus on dialogue, outreach and practical assistance with implementation and capacity building. The United Kingdom was a co-sponsor of UNSCR 1540. 1540 rightly set the bar high. The international community's armour against weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists and criminals is as strong as its weakest link. 1540 also recognised that some states would require assistance to achieve full implementation. The United Kingdom accepts this will require investment of time and resources. We call on those states that require assistance to implement their 1540 obligation to make their needs known and on those who can provide resources or relevant know-how, to assist. The United Kingdom will play its role in assisting implementation both bilaterally and through the European Union.

The United Kingdom reaffirms its support for the principle and practice of nuclear weapon-free zones and underlines its willingness to play an active and constructive role in their development. We have signed and ratified protocols to the Treaties, which cover Africa, the South Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The United Kingdom hopes that the nuclear weapons states and the Association of South East Asian Nations will be able to resume consultations in the framework of United Nations Development Commission's 1999 Guidelines to that the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok can be agreed and ratified. We remain disappointed that the Treaty on a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was signed on 8 September 2006 without conclusion of consultations over the text of the Treaty, and in the full knowledge that serious issues would preclude ratification of the Protocol by the United Kingdom. Despite our best efforts, since we last had consultations in 2002, it has not proved possible to persuade the Central Asian States to discuss this issue further. But the creation of a purported nuclear weapon-free zone that gives primacy to previous security arrangements, and does not live up to the vision of Article VII of the NPT in assuring total absence of nuclear weapons, left us with no option. We note the recent report of ratification of the Treaty of Semipalatinsk by Turkmenistan and urge those States that have yet to ratify the Treaty to do so. We can then seek to resolve the outstanding differences.

Mr Chairman

The United Kingdom reaffirms its support for a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction as set out in the Middle East Resolution at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. We are committed to achieving the implementation of such a zone. We have consistently supported the First Committee of the UN General Assembly in calling for a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We are committed to the universalisation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and call on the

states that have not signed to do so as non-nuclear weapon states. We look forward to further discussion of this important issue in the session on 6 May.