

UK  
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOHN DUNCAN  
TO THE FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE EIGHTH REVIEW  
CONFERENCE OF THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR  
WEAPONS, HELD IN VIENNA FROM 30 APRIL – 11 MAY 2007.

**CLUSTER I**

Mr Chairman,

1. The UK supports the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany on behalf of the EU. I would like to add some further comments from a national perspective. Given the time constraints, I will be brief. More detail on the UK position on disarmament is contained in a working paper we have submitted to the meeting.
2. The United Kingdom is absolutely committed to multilateral nuclear disarmament. Our ultimate goal remains unchanged: we will work towards a safer world free from nuclear weapons.
3. The UK supports the disarmament obligations set out in Article VI of the NPT and has an excellent record in meeting these commitments. We remain committed to the Decisions and Final Document of the NPT Review Conferences in 1995 and 2000, including the relevant disarmament measures.
4. Mr Chairman, the recent decision by the UK to maintain our nuclear deterrent does not commit us to possessing nuclear weapons in 50 years' time. It does mean, however, that the UK will take the steps necessary to keep open the option of retaining a minimum deterrent beyond the life of the current submarines, should that prove necessary.
5. One delegation has suggested that the UK's decision could generate a new arms race. But our White Paper sets out further measures to reduce our nuclear forces. We will cut our stockpile of operationally available warheads by 20%. This amounts to a total reduction of the explosive power of UK nuclear weapons by 75% since the end of the Cold War. UK nuclear weapons account for less than 1% of the global inventory. The United Kingdom has reduced its deterrent to a single weapon system.
6. We have also significantly reduced the readiness of our remaining weapons. Normally, one Trident submarine is on patrol at any one time. It is at several days 'notice to fire'. Its missiles are not targeted at any country.
7. Building new submarines for our existing missile system does not undermine any of these disarmament steps. Let me be completely clear: any suggestion that the UK is further upgrading its nuclear weapons is a misunderstanding.
8. As our White Paper demonstrated, the UK is committed to transparency. We are also developing our expertise in the verification of the multilateral reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. We will present our latest research in this review cycle.
9. Mr Chairman, as Article VI of the NPT suggests, nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states have to work together to create the conditions for complete disarmament.
10. We welcome the significant reductions in the major nuclear arsenals since the end of the Cold War. But further bilateral reductions will be required before it will be useful to include the small fraction of the global stockpile that belongs to us.

11. Complete nuclear disarmament will also require confidence in the compliance by all states with their non-proliferation obligations under a universalised Non Proliferation Treaty.
12. How can we create the conditions for these objectives? What can we do to cap and set on an inevitably downward trend the numbers of nuclear weapons?
13. First, we must put in place a ban on further explosive testing of nuclear weapons. We urge all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.
14. Second, we can cap the amount of weapons usable fissile material. A Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty is the next logical step towards nuclear disarmament. We call on all members of the Conference on Disarmament to agree swiftly to the Presidencies' proposal and allow the CD to get back to work.
15. Mr Chairman, we remain committed to the negative and positive security assurances given in our letter to the Secretary-General of the UN in 1995.
16. The UK remains committed to our nuclear disarmament obligations under Article VI and continues to make progress to this end. The UK believes that the NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and urges all states to work together in this forum to achieve the goal we all share – a safer world free from nuclear weapons.

Thank you Mr Chairman.