



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

**Conference On Disarmament
Plenary Meeting On
Nuclear Disarmament**

**Statement By
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Of The United Kingdom
To The
Conference On Disarmament**

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Mr President

Our forum has achieved significant results in the past and we need to use the CD purposefully now if we are to meet key arms control and disarmament challenges. During the last three sessions various delegations have recognised efforts already made towards nuclear disarmament but have called for greater transparency on the part of nuclear weapons states with a view to strengthening confidence and encouraging progress within the CD.

Mr President

The UK welcomes the opportunity again to set out our record of engagement and progress to date. I am happy to be able to draw on points we have made at the 2005 NPT Review Conference to illustrate this.

Over the last thirteen years the UK has made substantial progress with regard to our nuclear disarmament obligations as set out in Article VI of the NPT. Action has included the withdrawal and dismantling of our maritime tactical nuclear capability; the withdrawal and dismantling of the RAF's WE177 nuclear bomb; and the termination of the nuclear Lance missile and artillery roles that we undertook with US nuclear weapons held under dual-key arrangements. As a consequence, we have reduced our reliance on nuclear weapons to one system, namely Trident. We are the only nuclear weapon state to have done so. Our nuclear forces patrol on reduced readiness. Only a single Trident submarine is on deterrent patrol at any one time, and it is normally retained at a reduced alert status. The missiles are not targeted at any country.

The UK holds fewer than 200 operationally available warheads – the minimum level necessary for the UK's national security. In all, the explosive power of UK nuclear weapons has reduced by 70% since the end of the Cold War.

Since 2000 we have been pursuing a programme to develop UK expertise in verifying the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons internationally, with the overall aim of finding potential methodologies which could be used in a future nuclear disarmament verification regime. We have undertaken this work as part of our commitment to making progress towards meeting the requirements of the disarmament provisions of the NPT.

The UK is committed to the maximum degree of transparency about our nuclear and fissile material stockpiles compatible with the requirement of our national security. In 1995 we announced that we had stopped the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We call upon others including those states not party to the NPT to follow this example.

In 1998 we were the first Nuclear Weapon State to declare the total size of these stocks. We then voluntarily placed all our fissile material no longer required for defence purposes under international safeguards where they are liable to inspection by the IAEA. We remain committed to transparency of our fissile material stocks.

As is well known, the UK has both signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and remains firmly committed to that Treaty. We have not carried out a nuclear explosive test since 1991.

In September 2004 the UK signed the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT in New York. This committed us to take measures to facilitate the signature and ratification process of the CTBT and dedicated us to realising the goal of the entering into force of the Treaty. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

Thank you Mr President.