First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Statement by the Acting Head of the United Kingdom Delegation, Ambassador Peter Jenkins.

9 April 2002

Check against delivery
Chairman, let me begin by saying how pleased we are to see you, a representative of an EU member state, presiding over this Preparatory Committee. We know the Committee could not be in better hands.

The UK fully supports and endorses the statement made yesterday by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union.

On 6 February this year, the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, made a speech on "The future of arms control and non-proliferation". In that speech, he acknowledged the challenges facing international approaches to arms control, but underlined that we should resist any temptation to despair. As he said, "arms control has been one of the outstanding successes of international policy for over 50 years". It is indeed a testimony to the value and resilience of the treaty to which we are all party that it remains as relevant and important now as when it came into force. The NPT was, still is, and should remain, the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Chairman, the events of 11 September demonstrated all too clearly the lengths to which some are willing to go to further their objectives. It’s painfully easy to imagine the destruction terrorists could wreak if they had access to weapons of mass destruction. There could be no better reminder of the importance of the commitments made by nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states alike to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials through the NPT.

The UK remains committed to the NPT as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. It is central to addressing threats that confront us all. Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are at the heart of the NPT. These twin objectives are often described as if they were divergent; even sometimes as if non-proliferation benefited one group of countries, nuclear disarmament another. In our view this is a dangerous dichotomy. As the Ambassador of Spain said yesterday in his statement on behalf of the European Union, non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. It is the UK's view, as we take this first step in a new review process, that we must continue to
strengthen non-proliferation measures and do everything we can to make progress on nuclear disarmament.

**Universality**

As the Foreign Secretary noted in his 6 February speech, there are challenges to the multilateral WMD regimes and these must be faced. But we must not forget how far we have come in the last decade. At the start of 1990, there were 137 states party to the NPT. Of these, only three were nuclear weapon states. There are now 187 states party, including all five nuclear weapon states.

The NPT is thus tantalisingly close to universality. Nevertheless, real difficulties in completing the last steps have become apparent. There are four countries that have not yet joined the NPT. We call on two of them, India and Pakistan, to work together to reduce nuclear tensions in the region by entering into a bilateral dialogue on confidence building measures as soon as possible, in the belief that this is a vital pre-requisite to their fulfilling the requirements of UN Security Council resolution 1172, including accession to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states. We call upon a third, Israel, to resolve international concerns about its nuclear status by acceding to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. And we hope that the fourth, Cuba, will reconsider its position on adherence to the treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state.

The UK would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm support for the objective of establishing an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction. We have submitted a report to the UN Secretariat outlining the UK’s contribution on Middle East issues, including our contribution to the realisation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which the UK co-sponsored.
Non-Proliferation

Chairman, in some ways, the problems of proliferation are more acute than they have ever been. 11 September has brought home to people everywhere the potential threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors. We must demonstrate in our discussions during these two weeks that as parties to the NPT we recognise these concerns and are able to respond to them. We must discuss issues relating to the prevention of nuclear terrorism, and the practical measures that we can take as individual countries, but working together, to ensure that terrorists do not gain access to nuclear material or nuclear weapons.

In this context, let me stress UK support for the action plan on the prevention of nuclear terrorism put to the IAEA's Board of Governors last month. The UK has made an initial voluntary contribution of £250,000 to the IAEA's new counter-terrorism voluntary fund.

The UK considers the adoption and implementation of strict export controls to be a key element in advancing our non-proliferation objectives. We fully support the export control regimes as an effective way of working together to inhibit proliferation by both State and non-State actors alike.

Upon signing the NPT, all countries commit to bringing into force comprehensive safeguards agreements (CSAs). It is with regret that the UK notes that 51 states still do not have CSAs with the IAEA in force. We hope this omission can be made good by the 2005 Review Conference. We also hope all NPT parties will make it a priority to bring into force Additional Protocols to their CSAs. Additional Protocols strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime by enhancing the Agency's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. As such, they are valuable and necessary tools to counter potential proliferation. We support the suggestion we heard yesterday that it should be considered an obligation for NPT parties to bring Additional Protocols into force.
Compliance

Chairman, compliance with IAEA safeguards provides the international community with assurance that the NPT’s integrity is being respected. In the past decade, the respect for the Treaty of two parties has been particularly in doubt. Iraq is one of them. The Iraqi regime’s refusal to meet its UN disarmament and monitoring obligations has led to real and justified concerns that, in the absence of international inspection, the Iraqi leadership is attempting to re-establish its WMD programs. We have urged Iraq to comply fully with its UN disarmament and monitoring obligations and to allow UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors to carry out the work with which they have been entrusted. We urge Iraq to take the necessary action to allow that to happen, and we urge the international community to recognise that in the face of this threat, inaction is not an option.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is the second of the two parties to which I referred. We welcome the IAEA Technical Team’s visit earlier this year to the nuclear facilities in the Nyongbyon area and the recent spent fuel counter calibration exercise in the UK. We call upon the DPRK to abide by all its obligations under the 1994 Agreed Framework. In particular, we urge North Korea to co-operate fully with IAEA inspectors to permit the earliest possible verification of the full extent of past nuclear activity. We also urge North Korea to end its destabilising trade in missile technology and to maintain its moratorium on the testing of ballistic missiles.

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

The UK recognises that for many NPT parties Article IV has especial importance. We have long been supporters of the IAEA’s Technical Co-operation programme and have contributed in full to the IAEA’s Technical Co-operation Fund. We will continue to do so. It is to be welcomed that the application of nuclear technologies can bring significant benefits in such areas of sustainable development as health, agriculture and the environment. We shall help promote the greatest possible effectiveness of this programme.
Nuclear Disarmament

Chairman, we welcome the significant commitments in relation to methods of achieving Treaty objectives made in 1995 and 2000. The final document of the 2000 Review Conference, including its "13 practical steps", identifies a number of ways in which nuclear weapon states can pursue nuclear disarmament.

The UK has led the way in taking measures to reduce its reliance on nuclear weapons to the minimum level necessary consistent with national security. In the last few years:

- we have unilaterally reduced our operationally available stockpile to fewer than 200 warheads, which represents a reduction of more than 70% in the potential explosive power of our deterrent since the end of the Cold War.

- we have reduced the readiness of our nuclear forces. Only a single Trident submarine is now on deterrent patrol, carrying 48 warheads. The submarine on patrol is normally on several days “notice to fire” and its missiles are de-targeted.

- and we have withdrawn the UK’s freefall nuclear bomb, leaving Trident as our only nuclear system.

I am pleased to be able to announce today that the UK’s last Chevaline warhead will be dismantled by the end of this month – part of our commitment to irreversibility in reductions in the UK’s nuclear weapons.

We have ratified the CTBT and have not carried out a nuclear explosion since 1991.

In 1995 we announced that we had stopped the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We call upon those who have not yet done so to follow our example.
We have become more transparent about our nuclear and fissile material stockpiles. We have, for example, placed fissile material surplus to defence purposes under international safeguards. We have also placed the reprocessing of spent fuel from the defence Chapelcross reactors under international safeguards to which all civil nuclear material in the UK is subject. And we have begun a national historical accounting study for fissile material produced.

We have also begun a programme to develop UK expertise in verifying the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons internationally;

Finally, we have agreed an Additional Protocol to our safeguards agreement with the IAEA and EURATOM as part of a world-wide effort to strengthen international safeguards arrangements. It will enter into force when the rest of the EU is ready.

Having reduced our nuclear weapons to a single system at the minimum level necessary for the UK’s national security, further unilateral steps we can take now without compromising that security are limited. We continue to encourage mutual, balanced and verifiable reductions in the numbers of nuclear weapons world-wide. When we are satisfied that sufficient progress has been made to allow us to include British nuclear weapons in multilateral negotiations without endangering our security interests, we will do so.

To this end, we value reductions in nuclear weapon levels achieved through unilateral and bilateral measures. Such initiatives have been highly important in the history of nuclear disarmament and the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We therefore welcome the encouraging signs from recent talks between the United States and the Russian Federation on reductions in their strategic offensive operationally-deployed nuclear arsenals. We hope the understandings being reached in these talks will be crystallised in the near future in a bilateral agreement.
Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

There are other actions which are the responsibility of the international community at a wider level which we hope this review process will assist in moving forward. We call on those countries whose ratification is necessary for the CTBT to enter into force to make every effort to achieve that goal. The CTBT is one of the steps agreed at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. From the UK perspective it continues to be an essential part of the structure that is needed to ensure non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. We are active in promoting its entry into force. Next month, we will be hosting a seminar in London with the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO to look at the potential civil and scientific benefits of the CTBT’s verification systems.

Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty

We hear a lot about the need to begin negotiations on nuclear disarmament in Geneva. But the first step towards nuclear disarmament, one that will immeasurably increase international confidence and combat proliferation, is to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. There has long been agreement on this among NPT parties. And yet the Conference on Disarmament has so far been unable to start negotiations on such a treaty, as called for by recent Review Conferences. The need for such a ban on fissile material production does not diminish with the passage of time; if anything it increases. It should not be held hostage to other issues. Those who wish to promote those other issues must rely on the merits of their case, not on linkages. Their security would not be damaged by a ban on producing fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as indeed they have publicly acknowledged. It would still be open to them to propose language in the negotiations to protect their concerns. Their linkage of this issue to others simply holds up progress and undermines confidence in their approach. Seven years ago, the Shannon Mandate gave the Conference on Disarmament the authority to negotiate such a ban on fissile material production. It is time that negotiation got underway. We shall be very
disappointed if there are no concrete achievements in this direction by the time of the 2005 Review Conference.

**Nuclear Weapon Free Zones**

The UK continues to support the principle of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones. Provided they are based on arrangements freely arrived at by all the states in the region concerned, we believe they can make a valuable contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and global and regional peace and security. The UK was pleased to be able to ratify Protocols to the Treaty of Pelindaba last year.

**Conclusion**

Chairman, we have an opportunity during this session not often granted to NPT states party. We do not have to reach agreed recommendations on the issues we discuss here; we have no formal conclusions to draw, and no specific tasks to perform to avoid the charge of failure. We have the chance to engage with one another on topics connected with the implementation of the NPT and to build a sound foundation for the next years of this review process. We should embrace that opportunity.

The NPT is 32 years old this year. In that time it has grown to having the largest number of states party of any arms control agreement. It is the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and offers valuable benefits to all states. Conscious that any treaty can only be as good as its membership wants it to be, the UK hopes that we can all now work together to ensure the fullest possible implementation of the NPT and to strengthen this important regime.

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