STATEMENT

By

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

On specific time attached to Cluster 1: Disarmament

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Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Intervention by the United Kingdom in specific time attached to Cluster 1: Disarmament

Mr Chairman,

We have the opportunity at these two meetings of the second session of the Preparatory Committee to focus on nuclear disarmament. I am keenly aware that this is the topic of particular interest for many countries, and also for NGOs and civil society.

The UK has long been and remains fully committed to the ultimate goal of verifiable global nuclear disarmament. Our contribution to the outcome of both the 1995 and 2000 Review Conference cycles and to the first PrepCom of this session last year is a clear demonstration of this. We remain fully committed to the Decisions and Resolution of the 1995 Conference, and to the Final Document of 2000.

As I mentioned on Tuesday, the UK has reduced its reliance on nuclear weapons to a single system – Trident – at the minimum level necessary for the UK’s national security.

We continue to encourage mutual, balanced and verifiable reductions in the numbers of nuclear weapons world-wide. And when we are satisfied that sufficient progress has been made that would allow us to include the UK’s nuclear weapons in multilateral negotiations, without endangering our security interests, we will do so.

In this context we warmly welcome the conclusion of the May 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty - or Treaty of Moscow - between the US and the Russian Federation. It was good to see the recent ratification of the Treaty by the US Senate and look forward to ratification also by the Russian Duma and to the early entry of the treaty into force.
Such initiatives contribute towards international stability and are welcome progress towards disarmament.

As in 2002, States Party have rightly expressed interest in reporting on disarmament measures by all states, as well as reporting on other measures linked to the Treaty. My intervention here today, Mr Chairman, like the UK interventions in 2002, sets out in summary recent main elements of UK contributions to nuclear disarmament.

The 2000 Final Document is a good, comprehensive, document. We all know it includes "13 practical steps", which identify a number of ways in which we can move towards global verifiable nuclear disarmament.

Within the last few years, the UK has taken many significant steps towards disarmament. I will set these out here, and then expand briefly on three particular areas:

- we have unilaterally reduced our operationally available stockpile to fewer than 200 warheads. This 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”.

- The missiles on the patrolling submarine are de-targeted.

- We have withdrawn the UK’s freefall nuclear bomb - known as the WE177;
• In April last year we dismantled the last of the UK’s Chevaline warheads, a demonstration of our commitment to irreversibility in reductions in the UK’s nuclear weapons;

• We have not only dismantled these warheads – we have also taken advantage of the to inform our work on the verification of nuclear disarmament, of which I will say more later.

In 1995 we announced that we had stopped the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the fact that several other states have taken the same step. And we call upon others, including those states not party to the NPT, to follow this example.

The UK is aware of the important role that can be played by transparency. Transparency contributes to mutual confidence and trust. In the last few years, we have, therefore, placed an increased emphasis on transparency of our nuclear and fissile material stockpiles. We have placed fissile material surplus to defence purposes under the same international safeguards to which all civil nuclear material in the UK is subject. We have also placed the reprocessing of spent fuel from the defence Chapelcross reactors under these international safeguards. And, as we mentioned last year, we have begun a national historical accounting study for fissile material produced for defence purposes.

We are keen to bring into force our protocol Additional to our current safeguards agreement with the IAEA. We completed the necessary domestic legislation in May 2000. We have been providing the IAEA with voluntary declarations of the type required of the UK under the protocol since September 1999. As you are aware, the UK will bring its Additional Protocol into force with the rest of the EU15.

Mr Chairman,
There are three areas in particular where I would like to highlight the UK's particular contribution. These are the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty and work carried out by the UK to contribute towards the 13th of the 13 steps: verification of nuclear disarmament.

**Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty**

The UK last carried out a nuclear explosion in 1991. Since then, we have both signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. We remain firmly committed to that Treaty.

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.

In May 2002, we hosted a seminar in London with the CTBT Organisation's Provisional Technical Secretariat. This was a technical experts group that examined various ways in which CTBT verification technology can be used to benefit civil society, including the scientific community. This "London Process" was taken forward in Vienna at an event we co-sponsored with Australia, the Netherlands and Japan. We hope that these benefits can ultimately be used to encourage states to sign and ratify the CTBT.

We urge all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify this Treaty.
Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty

I have already mentioned the UK's continued support for a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty. It is both a personal regret and the regret of my country that negotiations on this Treaty have not yet begun in the Conference on Disarmament. A Treaty that would ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is both an important non-proliferation step and an essential prerequisite for disarmament. The UK calls upon those who would link other issues to the negotiation of this Treaty to drop those linkages. Let those other issues stand on their own merit. An FMCT is in the interests of us all.

We were saddened to learn yesterday of the death of Ambassador Shannon of Canada. This remarkable man made possible the conclusion of a mandate in 1995 to negotiate an FMCT. We have since wasted eight years. Let us not waste any more time.

Nuclear verification

Mr Chairman, my final remarks today focus on a positive story. At the 2000 Review Conference we identified three areas relevant to nuclear arms control measures and our ultimate common goal, the global elimination of nuclear weapons. These were the ability to verify:

i. that states are not testing nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

ii. that states are not producing fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
iii. reductions and dismantlement of nuclear weapons and warheads in any State that might have produced or otherwise acquired them, and disposition of the fissile material arising.

I have just stressed the UK’s commitment to the first two of these, through the CTBT and an FMCT. On the third, in 2000, we announced that we had just commenced a programme to consider technology that could be used in the third of these: the verification of future arrangements seeking to reduce and ultimately eliminate stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The programme, which is still on-going, includes work to better understand:

i. The authentication of warheads and their components;

ii. The dismantlement of warheads and their components;

iii. The disposition of the fissile material arising, to ensure that it can no longer be used in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices; and

iv. The monitoring of nuclear complexes.

Work to date has focused on authentication. In other words, establishing that an item declared to be a nuclear warhead or a component from a nuclear warhead is actually that. We have used the UK’s dismantled WE177 and Chevaline warheads in this work.

Mr Chairman, I will not take up any more of this meeting’s valuable time on this issue. However, for those who wish to know more, our working paper on the subject was published yesterday. I hope that many of you will be able to join the UK for a presentation on the subject tomorrow – Thursday – lunchtime. Some of the experts who have been carrying out the research will be speaking.
Conclusion

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, I would offer three simple points: first that the UK remains committed to verifiable global nuclear disarmament; second that the UK has already taken significant steps towards this goal and continues to work actively to that end; and third, that as part of this commitment, we remain fully committed to the entry into force of the CTBT, and to the negotiation of an FMCT.

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