

## The United Kingdom's Record on Disarmament - 6th edition

### Moving towards the 7<sup>th</sup> UN Review Conference on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2005

By British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)

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#### Executive Summary

1. At the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in 2000, the UK and the four other declared nuclear weapons states gave an "*unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals*". They committed themselves to a programme of 13 practical steps to achieve this.
2. Two years later, there are no visible signs that the UK is implementing this commitment. Although there has been a reduction in the numbers of operational nuclear warheads in moving from Polaris to Trident, their accuracy and their destructive potential is enhanced and each warhead can now be targeted individually.
3. Far from using its influence with the United States to reaffirm the importance of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the UK is conniving with the US withdrawal from the treaty, to enable the proposed National Missile Defence programme to progress. Though, as yet, there has been no definitive statement from the UK, the signals are that it will grant permission for the use of the Fylingdales radar station and Menwith Hill communications centre, both of which are essential to the efficient operation of NMD.
4. The UK has yet to make a report to the Review Conference on its progress towards implementation of the 13 steps, as promised under step 12.
5. There is an unresolved contradiction in Labour's Foreign and Defence policies. On the one hand, the government is committed to retaining Trident, on the other to a Nuclear Weapons-Free World. Labour's Strategic Defence Review (SDR) of 1997 specifically excluded Trident, apart from saying "*it would be premature to abandon a minimum capability to design and produce a successor to Trident should this prove necessary*".
6. All the UK's nuclear capacity is in the Trident system, at Faslane on the Clyde estuary. The first Trident submarine has just arrived at Devonport for a re-fit, which will take two years. This, like the statement from the SDR (paragraph 5, above) is hardly compatible with the NPT commitment to work towards nuclear disarmament.
7. Co-operation between the UK and US teams working on the design and testing of nuclear warheads has increased significantly in recent years, in contravention of the spirit of Article 1 of the NPT Treaty. Presumably this work is on extending the life of Trident, or on a replacement for Trident, or both. The number of visits by UK personnel to the US Nevada Test Site rose from 4 in 1999 to 20 in 2001.

8. CND welcomes the UK commitment to cease the withdrawal of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons from safeguarded stocks but regrets that the Ministry of Defence will continue to withdraw from safeguards for testing purposes.
9. The UK has rejected several initiatives towards nuclear disarmament, such as the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion (July 1996), the Generals' and Admirals' Statement (July 1996) and the Canberra Commission's Report (August 1996). It criticised the New Agenda Coalition, which detailed practical steps on how to achieve nuclear disarmament, saying that some of its suggestions were incompatible with a "credible minimum deterrent", another example of the contradiction referred to in paragraph 5 above.
10. CND believes the UK is well placed to take a lead on the path to global nuclear disarmament. It sets out ten steps which the UK could take before the next NPT Review Conference in 2005.

### **British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) demands from this Labour Government**

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament believes that the UK, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and one of the five declared Nuclear Weapons States that gave an "unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons" at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, is well placed to take a lead on the path to global nuclear disarmament.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament therefore demands that the UK Government take the following practical steps before the next NPT Review Conference in 2005:

1. Use the UK-US special relationship to "press the United States to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty" as recommended by the December 2000 report of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, which said: "We note the importance of ensuring a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing". The Treaty needs to be signed and ratified by all the 44 States deemed to be nuclear capable in order to come into force;
2. Commit the UK not to resume nuclear testing, even if the Nevada Test Site should reopen, which seems increasingly likely;
3. Adopt without delay, the 'no-first use policy', which was advocated by the Labour Party while in opposition, given that the Party is now in government;
4. Abandon its current "sub-strategic role" policy relating to the Trident nuclear submarines;
5. De-alert and remove all nuclear warheads from their delivery systems and place them in safe storage;
6. Use its leading position in NATO and in the European Union to press for the establishment of an internationally recognized Nuclear-Weapon-Free zone in Europe in accordance with the Principles and Objectives of the NPT;

7. Establish an annually updated Fissile Material Inventory, which includes provisions for existing stock-piles and addresses the issue of tritium, a non-fissile material required to boost the explosive power of nuclear warheads;
8. Make a firm commitment not to extend the life of the present Trident nuclear weapons system and not to replace it when its current service life runs out.
9. Make a firm commitment for the progressive and verifiable closure of all sites designated for nuclear weapon systems research, testing, development and deployment, including laboratory testing and computer simulation.
10. Give an unequivocal undertaking not to allow the US the use of any base in Britain for the NMD project. Given the strong concerns that have been expressed both in the UK and in Europe about the destabilising impact of the US National Missile Defence system and a range of other systems under active consideration on nuclear disarmament regimes, and the danger of undermining international efforts to control proliferation;

In summary, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament urges the British Government to fulfil its responsibilities to the British electorates by implementing the recommendation of the UK Foreign Affairs select Committee hearing on British-US relations, which said: *“The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is currently 'leaking', and we recommend that the Government works in the closest conjunction with the US Administration to devise further specific and effective measures to enforce this crucial arms control agreement”*.

We also urge the government to present a written report back to the 2002 PrepCom on the progress the UK has made on implementing the 2000 NPT nuclear disarmament 'Plan of Action'.

Thirty two years after it entered into force on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is in danger of being universally perceived as enshrining the privileges of the few to retain nuclear weapons indefinitely against the needs of humanity to achieve their abolition, sooner rather than later.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament therefore calls on the British Government to put the needs of humanity first and lead the way to global abolition of nuclear weapons by putting words into deeds.