



**Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
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B R I E F I N G

D O C U M E N T

**Rejecting the logic of
'Counter-Proliferation':
Disarmament is the
key to global peace
and security**

Reflections on the United Kingdom's
record on nuclear disarmament since
2000: A contribution to debate from the
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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Rejecting the logic of 'Counter-Proliferation': disarmament is the key to global peace and security

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Executive summary

THERE have been many significant political changes in the world since the last NPT Review Conference in 2000. The full significance of the neo-conservative agenda following the election and re-election of George Bush as US President, the terrorist attacks on the US on September 11th 2001, the subsequent 'War on Terror' and the war on Iraq in March 2003, have all had a significant political impact, with major consequences for global nuclear disarmament.

Since the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear weapons states have failed to make progress towards global nuclear disarmament. Indeed, the trend is away from this. The nuclear weapons states have made little or no progress on the 13 steps agreed at the 2000 Review Conference and the agenda has shifted to focus almost entirely on the prevention of proliferation by non-nuclear weapons states. The war on Iraq, ostensibly based on the issues of disarmament and the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), proved in fact to be nothing of the sort. Surprisingly, given that virtually no one now believes that war was anything to do with weapons of mass destruction, the same political use of non-proliferation appears currently to be being used against Iran. Prevention of proliferation has become a political weapon in the armoury of states seeking to effect regime change in countries – some of those termed 'rogue states' – which do not comply with preferred social and economic norms. Coincidentally it seems to feature strongly where countries have resource or strategic significance. This misuse of non-proliferation, which strips disarmament out of the equation and ignores vertical proliferation, which is rife amongst the nuclear weapons states, has been dubbed counter-proliferation. CND rejects the logic of counter-proliferation because the focus only on one side of the equation will cause resentment and insecurity amongst non-nuclear weapons states, and, in an increasingly unstable world, may well provoke the very proliferation that we seek to avoid. Only a balanced implementation of the NPT, fulfilling the original bargain of disarmament and non-proliferation, will bring peace and genuine security to the world.

This report assesses how far the United Kingdom has moved away from the path of global nuclear disarmament and the 13 steps that were agreed at the 2000 NPT Conference and outlines a number of steps that the UK government can undertake to get back on track. In rejecting the UK government's logic of counter-proliferation, CND hopes that the 2005 NPT Review Conference will continue progress towards nuclear disarmament, building on the achievements of 2000, rather than discarding them and being distracted by the smoke screen of counter-proliferation.

Introduction

THE CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT (CND) is the leading UK-based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), that campaigns non-violently to secure global elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in order to create mutual security for all. To this end, CND empowers its members and supporters to engage actively in the political process for a nuclear-free world; stimulates wide public debate on the need for alternatives both to the nuclear cycle and to military options to resolve conflicts; co-operates with other groups in the UK and internationally to achieve a co-ordinated campaign; and lobbies the British government and parliament to influence their policy decisions in favour of the elimination of British nuclear weapons as a major contribution to global abolition.

CND has sent representatives to the NPT Preparatory Committee meetings and Review conferences since 1995 to make constructive comments on the UK's record on nuclear disarmament. Thus CND is joining other anti-nuclear and pro-peace organisations in New York from 2nd to 27th May to attend the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

As one of the five declared nuclear weapons states, the United Kingdom is required to comply with the Articles of the NPT, with particular reference to Article VI, its principles and objectives together with the agreements reached at the 2000 Review Conference. CND urges the UK government to summon up the political will to take an initiative towards disarmament, and confirm itself as a responsible member of the global community, complying with disarmament requirements. Furthermore, CND encourages the government to build on a commitment to, and enactment of, compliance by mobilising international support for global nuclear disarmament.

Consider the following points:

- At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the then UK Foreign Office Minister and the head of government delegation, the Rt Hon Peter Hain spoke optimistically and told the Conference: “the United Kingdom is practicing what we preach. We are unequivocally committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We are convinced that the NPT remains fundamental to achieving this goal”.
- At the end of the Conference, the UK and the four other declared nuclear weapons states, raised hopes when they signed a final document in which they “gave an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”.
- The hopes for “the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals” were tantalizingly brought within the reach when the UK and the four other declared nuclear weapons states committed themselves to a programme of 13 practical steps leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.
- However, on 5th June 2000, barely three weeks after the end of the Conference, the UK

Secretary of State for Defence Mr. Geoff Hoon, cast an ominous shadow over the NPT when he told Parliament: “the non-proliferation treaty agreement is an aspiration; it is not likely to produce results in the short term”.

- If, as Mr Hoon’s statement suggests, the UK was not planning for the early implementation of its 2000 NPT agreements, then the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States seem to have provided the perfect excuse for them to be completely disregarded.
- In March 2003 UK decided to join the US in waging an illegal war against Iraq, ostensibly to disarm the country of its weapons of mass destruction – a war that has claimed some 100,000 lives and which established that Iraq didn’t have any WMD after all.
- Since then, the British government has been promoting the concept of pre-emptive military strikes as an alternative policy for the disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. In his May 2003 address at Centre for European Reform, the British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said: “Since 11 September, all EU Member States recognise that the world has entered a dangerous new era. And we would all agree that the threats to our security – from terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and chaos and contagion from failing states – may in extremis require a military response”.

One year later, the Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair echoed this policy when he said: “The states that proliferate or acquire WMD illegally are doing so precisely to avoid containment... I call for a doctrine of international community, where in certain clear circumstances, we do intervene, even though we are not directly threatened”.

- The UK has also acquiesced in the decision by the US to reward Pakistan (a non-NPT nuclear weapons state) for its support in the war against terror, with the sale of nuclear-capable F-16 combat planes, a decision which India has warned risked creating a new arms race.
- British ministers seem to be preparing the ground for the re-writing of the NPT in order to give the five declared nuclear weapons states the legal right to own nuclear weapons. On 20th November 2003, the Defence Secretary Mr. Geoff Hoon told the British parliament: “Under the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, China and Russia are legally entitled to possess nuclear weapons”. On March 1st 2005, the Foreign Secretary Mr Jack Straw echoed the same view.
- Most critically, when asked in Parliament by Mr Blizzard, a Labour Member of Parliament for Waveney “what his priorities are for the forthcoming Nuclear Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May”, the British Defence Secretary Mr Geoff Hoon said: “The United Kingdom’s goals for the Review Conference are to make the case for stronger and more effective counter-proliferation measures”. [*British Parliamentary Hansard*, 17th March 2005]

- On 21st April 2005, Prime Minister Tony Blair was asked in a BBC interview: “The British independent nuclear deterrent is going to need replacing, probably a decision that has to be taken in the next government that takes office after May 5. Will you replace it?”

He replied: “Well, we’ve got to retain our nuclear deterrent, and we’ve had an independent nuclear deterrent for a long time. Now that decision is for another time, but in principle I believe it’s important to retain our own independent deterrent”. This is the latest in a series of similar statements, which illustrate that the UK is rejecting the principles of global nuclear disarmament.

The 13 steps of the 2000 NPT Review Conference

IN addition to giving an “unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”, the UK and the other four declared nuclear weapons states, as well as the 182 non-nuclear weapons states party to the Treaty, also agreed to take the following 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to achieve the complete elimination of the world’s nuclear weapons:

1. Sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without delay, and achieve its early entry into force;
2. Honour a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-tests pending entry into force of the CTBT;
3. Immediately commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) with a view to their conclusion within five years;
4. Immediately establish in the Conference on Disarmament a body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament;
5. Honour the principle of irreversibility in relation to nuclear disarmament;
6. Accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under Article VI of the NPT;
7. Facilitate the early entry into force and full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible while “preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability” and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons”;
8. Ensure the completion and implementation of the Trilateral Initiative between the US, Russia, and the IAEA;
9. Take the following further steps towards nuclear disarmament in a way that promotes international stability and peace for all:

- Unilaterally reduce their nuclear arsenals;
 - Increase transparency with regard to their nuclear weapons capabilities and their implementation of agreements under Article VI of the Treaty;
 - Further reduce their non-strategic nuclear weapons as an integral part of the nuclear disarmament process;
 - Further reduce the operational status of their nuclear weapons systems;
 - Ensure a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in their security policies as a means towards their total elimination;
 - Engage in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons as soon as appropriate;
10. Arrange to place all fissile material no longer needed for military purposes under IAEA safeguards to ensure it remains permanently outside military programmes;
 11. Reaffirm that their ultimate objective is general and complete disarmament under effective international control;
 12. Provide regular reports on their progress toward nuclear disarmament as agreed under Article VI of the NPT, commitments which were confirmed by the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice;
 13. Further develop their verification capabilities relevant to assuring compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements, and for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The UK's 13 steps in the opposite direction

CND is seriously concerned that instead of taking the 13 practical steps leading to complete elimination of its nuclear weapons as agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the UK has taken 13 steps in the opposite direction as follows:

1. Contrary to the UK's commitment to disarmament, on July 21st 2004 the British Defence Minister Geoff Hoon told parliament that the UK "is making necessary investment at the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston, and to keep open the options for a successor to Trident until a decision is required, probably in the next Parliament." Thus it fails to make a firm commitment that it will not extend the life of its present Trident nuclear weapons system, and will not replace it when its current service life runs out. This is the one step that would accomplish the total elimination of its nuclear arsenals to which it committed itself at the 2000 NPT Review Conference;

2. Contrary to the UK's commitment to "ensure a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in their security policies as a means towards their total elimination"; the British Defence Secretary Mr Geoff Hoon has told Parliament that the UK would use nuclear weapons under the right circumstances. This statement is also in direct contradiction of the Negative Security Assurances under which the UK agreed not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states;
3. Signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which grants the US the permission for the use of the Fylingdales early-warning communications centre, which is integral to the efficient operation of a Missile Defence system;
4. Renewed the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) with the US, allowing co-operation and exchange of information and technical personnel for research, design, development and the testing of nuclear warheads in contravention of the spirit of Article 1 of the NPT Treaty;
5. Failed to implement the recommendation of the July 2000 report of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee inquiry on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This urged "the Government to co-operate with the US Administration and encourage the new US President to re-submit the CTBT to the Senate for ratification as an urgent priority", and recommended that "the Government should fully support the proposed 18 per cent increase in the CTBT Organisation's budget for 2001 report, given the importance of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation in stemming nuclear proliferation";
6. Failed to act on the July 2000 report of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee hearing on WMD which recommended that "the Government make renewed efforts to help to break the impasse on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations and ensure that substantive negotiations commence quickly". This is in spite of the commitment made by the UK at the 2000 NPT Review Conference that it would "immediately commence negotiations on FMCT with a view to their conclusion in five years";
7. Failed to reach agreement on the establishment in the CD of appropriate subsidiary bodies with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament;
8. Failed to significantly reduce the operational status of its nuclear weapons systems as agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, by, for example, de-alerting and removing its nuclear warheads from their delivery systems;
9. Failed to abandon its 'minimum nuclear deterrent policy', a vital move that would ensure a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in their security policies;
10. Failed to declare that its stocks of fissile material are no longer required for military purposes under IAEA;

11. The UK is yet to make any report on its implementation of Article VI of the Treaty, and to provide any assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world;
12. In 2002, commenced an eight-year programme at Devonport Dockyard to refit the four Trident nuclear weapons system. This is hardly compatible with the NPT commitment to work towards nuclear disarmament;
13. Continues to maintain membership of NATO a nuclear-armed military alliance with a first-strike policy which is incompatible with NPT compliance.

The UK and the new doctrine of counter-proliferation

SINCE the 2000 NPT Conference, the UK has taken two critical policy steps, which clearly signal that it is moving away from its commitment to global nuclear disarmament to a position of selective disarmament:

- The decision by the British Foreign Office to rename the department for 'Nuclear Non-Proliferation' the department for 'Counter-Proliferation'.
- In April 2003, the UK and the USA co-sponsored the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 'Proliferation Security Initiative' or PSI. According to the US State Department, "The goal of the PSI is to create a more dynamic, creative, and proactive approach to preventing proliferation to or from nation states and non-state actors of proliferation concern... PSI is a lasting initiative that over time will establish a web of counter-proliferation partnerships to prevent trade in WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials".

These two policy steps are reflected in the UK government's approach to the NPT. When asked in Parliament by Mr Jeremy Corbyn, a Labour Member of Parliament for Islington North and CND Vice Chair, "what UK representations there will be at the 2005 non-proliferation treaty review conference; and what proposals they will put forward", Dr Dennis MacShane, the British Foreign Office Minister for Europe said: "The UK will send a full delegation to the 2005 review conference. We will stress the need for a stronger and more effective counter-proliferation regime and the central role of the NPT as its cornerstone. We will emphasise the importance of compliance with the treaty and will promote the adoption of safeguards. We will emphasise the strength of the UK's positive record on nuclear disarmament and we will present a final report of the studies we have conducted on the verification of nuclear disarmament". [*British Parliamentary Hansard*, 13th December 2004].

Conclusion

CND calls on the UK government to turn away from counter-proliferation and recommit to non-proliferation with disarmament at its heart.

In particular, CND calls on the government to take the following confidence-building measures as first steps:

- Make an unequivocal statement that it will not extend the life of the present Trident nuclear weapons system and not replace it when its current service life expires;
- Stop research and design work on a new generation of nuclear weapons, which CND believes to be currently underway at Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE);
- Abandon pre-emptive war as a policy for the disarmament of states possessing nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction;
- Support the appeal by over 40 Nobel prize-winners, and 277 nongovernmental organisations and parliamentarians from around the world, who have urged that strategic nuclear weapons systems be 'stood down' from Launch on Warning status, in order to lessen the risk of accidental nuclear war. To that end, the UK should de-alert and remove all nuclear warheads from their delivery systems and place them in safe storage.

These are all steps towards the ultimate CND goal of scrapping Trident – the UK nuclear weapons system – and global nuclear disarmament.