

**House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations
Rising nuclear risk, disarmament and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty**

Government Response

1. The level of nuclear risk has increased, in particular since the decline in relations between Russia and the West from 2014. There is a danger that misunderstanding, miscalculation or mistakes could lead to the use of nuclear weapons. Steps to manage and reduce this risk should be of the highest priority for the Government (paragraph 21).

2. While preventing the proliferation of nuclear capabilities to Non-Nuclear Weapon States must remain a priority, the principal cause of increased risk is the continued and at times expanding reliance of nuclear possessor states on their nuclear weapons. (Paragraph 22)

3. The world is increasingly multipolar, which means approaches to managing nuclear risk cannot focus only on the US, NATO and Russia. Efforts must also include states such as China, as well as nuclear possessor states outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty. (paragraph 30)

Combined response to 1, 2 and 3:

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been, and continues to be, a significant success. Over the past fifty years it has minimised the proliferation of nuclear weapons, led to significant levels of nuclear disarmament and provided the framework to develop secure and safe peaceful uses of nuclear energy globally. Before the NPT entered into force, there were predictions of dozens of nuclear-armed states – yet there remain fewer than ten. The NPT has provided a clear framework and mandate to address the proliferation of nuclear weapons, helping to maintain global security.

The Government also believes that today's security environment is increasingly uncertain. The resurgence of Russia over recent years, the rise of Chinese assertiveness in strategically important areas, and the emergence of DPRK as a nuclear weapons possessor are all examples of how the international security environment has changed. Given the current global security situation and the growing number of diverse and complex threats - from cyber through to nuclear - the UK Government does not feel that it would be appropriate to disarm any further or undermine the credibility of our deterrent.

However, the UK continues to work with its Allies to encourage all possessor states to recognise their responsibilities and remains committed to the gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated within the framework of the NPT, as the security situation allows. Fora such as the P5 process, the Conference on Disarmament, UK bilateral dialogues with a wide range of countries, the Preparatory Committees and Review Conferences of the NPT provide opportunities to engage with all nuclear weapon possessor states on non-proliferation and disarmament issues, including transparency and risk reduction issues.

The UK keeps its defence nuclear policy under constant review and we regularly engage with international security partners to assess how and when we can do more to build confidence between states. We are a forward-leaning nation when it comes to responsibility. We have taken a number of unilateral actions to build confidence and reduce tensions. These measures include:

- UK missiles not being targeted at any state since 1994;

- UK submarines at several days' notice to fire;
- Only the Prime Minister having the authority to launch UK nuclear weapons so political control is maintained at all times;
- UK nuclear weapons being political, not military, weapons. Their purpose is to deter the most extreme forms of aggression;
- Transparency in relation to our nuclear capability, including missile and warhead numbers.

4. Notwithstanding current tensions, the Government should be prepared to talk to Russia about nuclear strategic stability. The risks of miscommunication, misperception and miscalculation are too grave to allow other aspects of Russia's behaviour to preclude talks on nuclear issues (paragraph 35).

5. It is also important that NATO has a dialogue with Russia on nuclear issues as part of an effort to take all steps to reduce the risk of nuclear use. One way of doing this would be to reinvigorate dialogue within the NATO-Russia Council. (paragraph 36).

6. We do not regard such contacts, which took place even at the height of the Cold War, as constituting 'business as usual' (paragraph 37).

Combined response to 4, 5 and 6:

The Government agrees NATO should continue to engage in dialogue with Russia, when it is appropriate and in our interests to do so, so we can clearly communicate our positions. We agree that an effective deterrence strategy requires dialogue. That is why NATO pursues a 'dual-track' approach to Russia – strengthened deterrence and defence, backed up by hard-headed dialogue.

Periodic, focused and meaningful dialogue through the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) provides a means to avoid misunderstanding, miscalculation and unintended escalation, and to increase transparency and predictability, including calling on Russia to return urgently to full and verifiable compliance of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. NATO does not want a new arms race, and Allies remain committed to effective arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Government continues to support the use of the NRC as a forum for dialogue with Russia. We do not consider this to constitute "business as usual". There can be no return to business as usual until there is a clear, constructive change in Russia's actions that demonstrates compliance with international law and its international obligations.

In addition to the NRC, we continue to use other fora such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and direct mil-mil links to mitigate the risk of escalation and voice concerns over Russian behaviour, including its failure to uphold Treaty obligations. There is also a regular exchange between all Nuclear Weapon States on nuclear issues within the P5 process. The Chinese made a statement on behalf of the P5 on 1 May 2019 at the Third Preparatory Committee of the NPT Review Cycle, which highlighted the intention 'to conduct expert-level consultations to explore the possibility of explaining nuclear policy and doctrine through jointly holding a side-event during the 2020 Review Conference'.

The Government has recently engaged with a number of senior Russian officials. While welcome, this does not signify a reset in bilateral relations. The Government will continue to engage with Russia on matters of international security as this is in the UK's national interest. However, Russia must alter its behaviour before we consider a different kind of

relationship. If Russia signalled that it was ready to change course, the UK would respond positively.

7. We welcome international efforts to increase the security of nuclear and radioactive materials and thus reduce the risk posed by non-state actors. The security of nuclear stockpiles and measures to prevent proliferation must remain a priority for the Government (paragraph 42).

Ensuring the security of nuclear and radioactive materials is fundamental to maintaining global access to the many benefits of their peaceful uses. The consequences of a terrorist act using nuclear or other radioactive materials would be severe, not just for those directly affected but also for public confidence in the safety and security of these technologies.

The UK works closely with other states and multi-national organisations to ensure the security of nuclear and radioactive materials, their associated facilities and transport arrangements, and security or proliferation-sensitive information from non-state actors. Following the Nuclear Security Summit process which concluded in 2016, the UK has consistently been one of the most active countries in promoting continued strengthening of global nuclear security, and providing assistance to other countries in this regard.

As part of this, the UK is a strong supporter of the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the international nuclear security architecture. The UK is the second largest Member State donor to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund, through which we have supported projects to enhance the physical protection of civil nuclear facilities, and build the capacity of those organisations responsible for their security, in a number of countries and regions. The UK also supports the IAEA's capabilities to provide more and better assistance, and we recently pledged over £2M to equip a physical protection training facility near Vienna.

The global system of nuclear safeguards continues to be vital in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The UK believes that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement plus an Additional Protocol is the universal verification standard and we support the IAEA's continued efforts to strengthen the international safeguards system across the world and further reduce any risks of material being proliferated to state and non-state actors for military use. The UK has provided a comprehensive programme of additional financial, training and technical support to the IAEA's safeguards function for nearly 40 years, and will continue to do so.

8. Nuclear possessor states are developing more sophisticated capabilities, utilising new technologies, and there is increasing 'entanglement' between conventional and nuclear weapons. These developments increase the possibility of miscalculation and the speed of decision-making, both of which could result in an escalation of hostilities.

The development of new and novel technologies, either in the conventional or nuclear domain, may have a negative impact on regional or global stability. These technologies in the hands of a strategic competitor may undermine a state's confidence in its ability to credibly deter an extreme threat, raising the potential for miscalculation. This is one reason the international security environment is increasingly uncertain which is why the Government believes the maintenance of our existing minimum credible deterrent is necessary.

9. The Government should review the resilience of the UK's nuclear deterrent and associated systems in the context of emerging technologies, in particular cyber capabilities. It should report its key findings to Parliament (paragraph 66).

The Government takes its responsibilities for maintaining a credible independent nuclear deterrent extremely seriously and has robust measures in place to keep the nuclear deterrent safe and secure. We invest significant resources into ensuring the deterrent's protection against cyber and other threats; however, it is not Government policy to comment on specific security measures related to the nuclear deterrent for the purposes of safeguarding national security. More broadly, the Government takes cyber security very seriously across the board, that is why we doubled investment in that area to £1.9 billion in the last Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) in 2015.

10. Reckless nuclear rhetoric in an era of digital communications potentially increases the risk of misperception and thus nuclear use (paragraph 70).

11. We are concerned by the lack of understanding by nuclear possessor states of their respective nuclear doctrines and declaratory policies. Misunderstanding of these policies could increase the risk of use of nuclear weapons (paragraph 86)

12. The importance of the principle that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" has not diminished. The Government should publicly endorse this principle and encourage all nuclear possessor states to do the same (paragraph 88).

Combined response to 10, 11 and 12:

The UK's public policy on nuclear deterrence, our capability and force structure, which includes our declaratory policy, is set out in the 2015 SDSR and the 2006 white paper, "The Future of the UK's Nuclear Deterrent". In order to avoid simplifying the calculations of our potential adversaries, we remain deliberately ambiguous about when, how and at what scale we would contemplate use of our nuclear weapons. As these documents make clear, the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent is a political, not a warfighting tool.

The existence of states who engage in provocative nuclear rhetoric, reliance on doctrine that promotes the use of nuclear weapons, and who develop new delivery capabilities designed to undermine strategic stability are a constant reminder that our independent nuclear deterrent remains essential to deter the most extreme threats to our national security and that of our Allies. We maintain dialogue on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as wider security issues with a variety of states, including nuclear possessor states.

The P5 process allows a regular frank exchange of views on a range of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues, which includes our respective nuclear doctrines, with a view to increasing mutual understanding. The Chinese Government delivered a statement on behalf of the P5 at the 2019 NPT Third Preparatory Committee, highlighting our intention to 'conduct expert-level consultations to explore the possibility of explaining nuclear policy and doctrine through jointly holding a side-event during the 2020 Review Conference'. The P5 also engage in reporting on their implementation of the NPT, in line with the 2010 Action Plan, and joint products such as the P5 glossary of nuclear terms also help increase mutual understanding of each other's respective views.

13. The UK should stand by its commitment, as a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and one of its three depositary powers, to implementing

commitments across all three pillars of the NPT—non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear technology and disarmament (paragraph 96).

The UK Government continues to fully support the NPT and remains committed to implementing all three pillars. We tabled a draft National Report to the 2019 NPT Third Preparatory Committee, which sets out how we have implemented our NPT commitments. A copy has been deposited in the House library and a final version will be tabled at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

14. The UK's active role in developing effective techniques and partnerships for the verification of nuclear disarmament is a helpful contribution to the disarmament agenda. The Government should continue this work, and consider opportunities for using new technologies in verification (paragraph 112).

15. The Government should consider engaging China in its work on nuclear disarmament verification (paragraph 113).

16. The Government should consider facilitating discussion and technical work on nuclear verification with Middle Eastern countries, to build regional capabilities and increase dialogue on non-proliferation and disarmament (paragraph 114).

54. The UK's contribution to disarmament verification was widely welcomed by witnesses. It should continue this work, and be prepared to increase its wider funding for research on non-proliferation and disarmament (paragraph 432).

Combined response to 14, 15, 16 and 54:

We welcome the Committee's recognition of the UK's leading role in developing effective verification measures for nuclear disarmament. The Government is committed to continuing this verification work both domestically and in collaboration with a diverse group of other countries; as well as our continued work on initiatives such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) and the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). Under the Quad Partnership with Norway, Sweden and the US, we held the first-ever nuclear disarmament verification exercise in October 2017 at RAF Honington in the UK, where we identified a number of areas for further research and collaboration. A UK priority going forward will be determining how best to build global capacity in this specialist field and we would strongly encourage any state that wishes to contribute to the development of nuclear disarmament verification to get involved. China, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have previously participated in the IPNDV, with the UAE hosting an IPNDV plenary in 2016, and we would very much welcome their continued involvement.

The UK Government continues to invest in a range of verification programmes and making use of new technologies is an important part of this work. Experts at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) continue to research new techniques for confirming the presence or absence of certain materials and providing effective chain of custody of components. Technologies such as virtual reality are also being investigated, which may allow for more efficient training of on-site inspectors.

17. The P5 is an important initiative in nuclear diplomacy, which could play a positive role in co-ordinating the implementation by the five Nuclear Weapon States of their Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments. It must not become a 'cartel' of

Nuclear Weapon States, simply lecturing others on why their continued possession of these weapons is justified. (Paragraph 124)

18. We welcome the role played by China as the chair of the P5 process in 2018–19. Trust between the P5 remains low, and meetings in the P5 format could help to build understanding and trust between these states. This could, in the run up to the 2020 Review Conference, contribute to a reduction in the risk of nuclear use. (Paragraph 130)

46. Assuming the chair of the P5 process from May 2019 presents a significant opportunity for the UK. It should encourage the other Nuclear Weapon States to use the P5 process for more substantive discussions, and as a forum to promote greater transparency between them. (Paragraph 425)

Combined response to 17, 18 and 46:

We welcome the Committee's assessment of the P5 process as an important initiative. The P5 process provides a forum to increase transparency and build confidence amongst the Nuclear Weapon States to help create the conditions for frank, open and honest discussions on nuclear disarmament related issues. It is not an opportunity for us to caucus or opt for the lowest common denominator. The P5 often take divergent views on a range of issues.

The P5 intend to continue to meet regularly via the P5 process in the run up to the 2020 Review Conference. As set out in the statement by China on behalf of the P5 to the NPT Third Preparatory Conference, the P5 have indicated their readiness to work together to lay a good foundation for a successful NPT Review Conference in 2020. We expect substantive discussions to take place.

19. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains a critical part of international security. The success of the treaty will remain of central importance to the UK's security and to the rules-based international order as a whole. (Paragraph 167)

20. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's successes—near-universal membership, a considerable reduction in nuclear stockpiles since the 1980s, and the establishment of an international norm against new states acquiring nuclear weapons—should be lauded. (Paragraph 168)

We agree with the Committee's assessment of the importance of the NPT and its successes. As Sir Alan Duncan, UK Minister for Europe and the Americas, set out in his evidence, the UK will work towards a successful 2020 Review Conference. This includes highlighting the NPT's successes to date. For example, the UK, US and Russia issued a joint ministerial statement in July 2018 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT opening for signature.

21. The presence of nuclear-armed states outside the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty remains a challenge. The UK should pursue opportunities to include nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in its bilateral discussions with India, Pakistan and Israel (paragraph 169).

We maintain dialogue on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as wider security issues with a variety of states, including nuclear possessor states. The Government of Israel has not declared a nuclear weapons programme.

22. Although nuclear possessor states outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are unlikely to disarm in the short term, the UK should continue to advocate for the universalisation of the treaty (paragraph 170).

The UK Government will continue to advocate for the universalisation of the NPT. We have expressed this position in bilateral meetings as well as in statements at the UN Security Council, for example, in a statement by the UK Minister for Asia-Pacific in January 2018, and at NPT Preparatory Committees as well as other relevant fora.

23. Largely as a result of the worsening security environment, global progress towards disarmament has stalled. We urge the Government to set out its view on what the necessary global conditions for disarmament would be, and use its position in the P5 to encourage progress under this pillar of the NPT (paragraph 171).

45. The UK has a strong track record of disarmament—having unilaterally reduced its arsenal to a single strategic system—and has been actively engaged in counter-proliferation work, including talks with Iran. In the run up to the 2020 Review Conference, it should set out a clear vision for future work towards disarmament, and seek to influence the Nuclear Weapon States to fulfil their obligations under the three pillars of the NPT (paragraph 412).

Combined response to 23 and 45:

The UK Government regularly sets out its position on the necessary path to disarmament. Examples are reflected in statements at the Conference on Disarmament, at the UN General Assembly's First Committee, during the NPT Review Cycle including in National Reports tabled at the 2014 and 2019 Third Preparatory Committees, and the 2015 NPT Review Cycle. A National Report will be published at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

The UK Government firmly believes the best way to achieve our long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament, negotiated using a step-by-step approach within existing frameworks and taking into account current and future security risks. Globally, disarmament is happening. Overall, the number of nuclear weapons in the world has reduced by nearly three-quarters since its peak in the mid-1980s.

Productive results can only be achieved through a consensus-based approach that takes into account the wider global security context. It is only through building the necessary mutual trust between states, and through putting into place the key international architecture to help build the conditions for further disarmament, that we can make progress on a realistic and effective route towards the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We believe developing effective measures for verifying nuclear disarmament will be vital for enabling the fulfilment of the goals of Article VI of the NPT.

The UK regularly sets out its position on nuclear disarmament to the P5, for example, through the P5 process.

24. Nuclear modernisation is a necessary part of the maintenance of nuclear weapons and can make these weapons more secure. However, the programmes of many nuclear possessor states go well beyond what can properly be described as modernisation, introducing new capabilities and potentially increasing nuclear risk. We are particularly concerned about new developments in the field of tactical nuclear weapons. (Paragraph 196)

25. The UK's nuclear modernisation programme, although not without its critics, focuses on the renewal of its existing capabilities for a minimum credible deterrent. The Government should encourage other nuclear-armed states to exercise restraint in their modernisation programmes and to avoid expanding their nuclear capabilities (paragraph 197).

Combined response to 24 & 25:

Maintaining and renewing elements of a state's nuclear deterrent capability to ensure its continued safety and reliability is a necessary aspect of being a responsible nuclear weapon state and fully consistent with obligations under Article VI of the NPT. However, these modernisation programmes should be distinguished from those which aim to develop new and novel systems that impact current stability or breach arms control treaty restrictions. The UK continues to work with its Allies to encourage all possessor states to recognise their responsibilities and remains committed to gradual multilateral disarmament as the security situation allows.

26. The issue of a Weapons of Mass Destruction-Free Zone in the Middle East has become one of the most contentious for successive Non- Proliferation Treaty Review Conferences. The UK should continue to support work towards the forthcoming UN conference on a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction-Free Zone, and should encourage Israel to participate (paragraph 214).

27. The Government should also support dialogue and confidence building steps in the Middle East—such as a regional testing moratorium—with the aim of increasing trust and improving the security environment. We believe that any increase in dialogue and reduction in tensions in the Middle East would be welcome and could make a contribution to the overall success of the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (paragraph 215).

Combined response to 26 and 27:

The UK Government remains committed to the 1995 resolution, which was co-sponsored by the UK, US and Russia, on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. As a co-sponsor, we fully recognise our responsibilities under the 1995 resolution and remain prepared to actively support and facilitate renewed regional dialogue with and among all states of the region in a structured manner that is inclusive, balanced, consensus-based and results orientated, with a view to overcoming the current differences.

The Government has not yet decided whether we will participate in the forthcoming UN conference, mandated by the Arab Group UN General Assembly Decision. We continue to be deeply concerned that the Decision was tabled without the consensus of all states in the region. Unless a resolution is found that takes into account the concerns of all parties, this is going to severely impede the effectiveness of this Decision. It is our long held view that all processes related to a zone free of nuclear and all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East should be based on consensus and be freely arrived at by all states of the region, in line with the 1995 resolution and the 2010 NPT Action Plan. We encourage the sponsors of this resolution to reach out to all states of the region. The UK strongly opposes any attempt to use this issue to single out one state.

We have not yet seen an agenda for the conference but if it is to be credible, it cannot just focus on nuclear issues. It would need to take account of current pressing threats in the region, which includes the use of chemical weapons in the region, an abhorrent weapon of mass destruction, as well as the proliferation of ballistic missiles. We also await further clarity on how this initiative will interact with the separate NPT review process. We have already held several useful consultations with relevant parties, including in the margins of the Third

NPT Preparatory Committee, and will continue to seek the views of affected parties before reaching a national view.

28. The Ban Treaty has little chance of achieving its goals in the short to medium term, not least because none of the nuclear possessor states are signatories. While we welcome evidence from its proponents that it will not undermine the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we believe the Ban Treaty risks exacerbating existing polarisation between Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Weapon States while delivering no immediate disarmament benefits. We understand and accept that the Government will remain opposed to the Ban Treaty (paragraph 262).

29. We also believe however that the increasing signs of division between Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Weapon States are matters of concern, and that the dissatisfaction of the Ban Treaty's proponents with the status quo on disarmament should be taken seriously. We therefore recommend that the Government should adopt a less aggressive tone about this treaty and seek opportunities to work with its supporters towards the aims of Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which concerns disarmament. (paragraph 263)

Combined response to 28 and 29:

We welcome the Committee's recognition of the Government's position on the Ban Treaty and our concern that it could risk greater polarisation between the nuclear and Non-Nuclear Weapon States with no disarmament benefits. The Government's view is that productive results on nuclear disarmament can only be achieved through a consensus-based approach that takes account of the global security context. A ban will not improve the international security environment or increase trust and transparency. Nor will it address the technical and procedural challenges of nuclear disarmament verification. We hope that its proponents will minimise disruption to the NPT, particularly in the run up to the NPT Review Conference in 2020.

The UK Government used the opportunity of the recent NPT Third Preparatory Committee to hold constructive discussions with a wide range of Non-Nuclear Weapon States, including advocates of the Ban Treaty. Advocates of the Treaty welcomed the meeting and, although we continue to make our position on the Ban Treaty clear, we will continue our engagement with all interested Non-Nuclear Weapons States and Nuclear Weapon States on NPT related issues, including how to make progress on multilateral disarmament.

30. More openness from the UK, as a responsible nuclear state, on the possible humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and a willingness to engage on developing strategies to manage the consequences of nuclear weapons use, would be welcome (paragraph 264).

We share the deep concern at the humanitarian consequences which could result from the **use** of nuclear weapons. That is why the UK Government works hard to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to keep our own nuclear weapons safe and secure. However, the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons has played a major role in avoiding large-scale conflict for almost 70 years. It is right that the UK should retain a credible, continuous and effective minimum nuclear deterrent for as long as the global security situation makes that necessary.

31. The US decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal is against the interests of the United Kingdom and undermines the global non-proliferation regime. The

Government has been right to defend the deal; we welcome its co-operation with European partners to find ways to preserve it (paragraph 287).

The UK Government regrets the US decision to withdraw from the JCPoA and re-impose sanctions on Iran. We are clear that the nuclear deal with Iran is in all of our interests. We are working with our European partners to ensure it is upheld as long as Iran continues to meet its nuclear commitments in full.

32. The Government should consult its partners in the Iran nuclear deal about how best to ensure that the gains to the non-proliferation regime delivered by the constraints on Iran's nuclear programme set out in the deal are not put in jeopardy when its time-limited provisions come to an end (paragraph 288).

The JCPoA is a key achievement of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. We have always been clear that a nuclear-armed Iran would never be acceptable to the UK. Several provisions within the deal have no expiry date, such as the application of the IAEA's Additional Protocol and Iran's abidance by its commitments under the NPT. Iran's commitment that its nuclear programme will be exclusively peaceful and civilian is permanent.

33. We welcome efforts to seek a diplomatic solution to North Korea's nuclear programme. Any future deal achieving the denuclearisation of North Korea will need to be complete and verifiable (paragraph 310).

The North Korean nuclear weapons programme poses an unacceptable threat to the international community, continuing to challenge non-proliferation norms and the NPT itself. Until North Korea's nuclear programme is dismantled, sanctions must remain and all states must enforce them in full.

We believe that negotiations are the best way to make progress towards denuclearisation. Even though a deal was not reached at the summit between President Trump and Kim Jong-Un in Hanoi it is clear that North Korea needs to engage in a meaningful negotiation process with the US and take concrete steps towards its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. We will continue to work with the US and our partners to support the talks process and to implement sanctions in full and we are proud to be contributing expertise to US efforts on denuclearisation.

34. Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would be a significant step towards nuclear disarmament. We regret that a number of Annex 2 countries have yet to ratify the treaty. We strongly welcome the UK's vocal support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and its financial support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation. Meanwhile, we welcome the fact that the P5 are operating de facto moratoriums on nuclear testing and urge the Government to use its influence to ensure that continues (paragraph 322).

We welcome the Committee's recognition of the UK Government's strong support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and share their regret that a number of Annex II states are yet to ratify this significant Treaty.

The UK Government are one of the largest financial contributors to the CTBT Organisation (CTBTO), after the US, and contribute £4.5m annually, as well as providing expertise and equipment. We also provide extensive technical and political support to the CTBTO's Preparatory Commission and we host 11 International Monitoring Stations.

We recognise the valuable contribution of voluntary national moratoria to international peace and security as we continue our work towards the entry into force of the Treaty. Nevertheless, the UK Government will continue to support the CTBT's entry into force, including through lobbying Annex II states to ratify.

35. The Conference on Disarmament is an important forum for non-proliferation and disarmament to be discussed by states, including those outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The UK should consider every option to unblock the Conference. One option could be to call for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty to be moved out of the Conference on Disarmament and into the UN General Assembly. While this would be likely to result in a treaty with less geographical coverage, a less well-subscribed to treaty would be better than no treaty at all, particularly if it included among its signatories the P5 countries which have ceased production of weapons-grade highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Moreover, the removal of this issue from the Conference on Disarmament would remove an obstacle to the forum agreeing a programme of work (paragraph 338).

We share frustration at the lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We tabled a Programme of Work in 2016 to attempt to unblock it, and during the UK Presidency of the CD in 2019, we introduced a draft Decision which would have renewed the CD's subsidiary bodies, including one that focused on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach agreement.

We do not agree with taking negotiations on an FMCT outside of the CD. One of the strengths of the CD is the respect that its members have for each other's national security interests. The consensus rule offers protection to these interests both during the negotiation phase and in the eventual signature and ratification phases of any Treaty. Taking an FMCT negotiation outside of the CD will not change states' security concerns. We continue to believe that these concerns should be addressed in negotiations under the CD's rules of procedure and according to the Shannon Mandate.

The UK, along with the US, France and Russia have long ceased producing fissile material for nuclear weapons – the benefit of an FMCT is that it will bind the remaining states that have unsafeguarded fissile material production facilities into a similar undertaking. If negotiations are started outside the CD, some of these states have indicated clearly that they will not participate.

The UK considers the start, and early conclusion, of negotiations of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices within the CD as an essential step on the road to complete global nuclear disarmament. We participated constructively in the UN expert process in 2018 to facilitate the negotiations of an FMCT.

36. We accept that Russia is in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Numerous attempts to resolve concerns about compliance have made no progress, which has led to the undesirable collapse of the treaty. The UK, along with its European partners, should use the ongoing discussions in NATO to promote approaches that could lead either to a revival of the treaty or, at least, to avoiding the deployment of such missiles in Europe by either party to the treaty (paragraph 366).

At every point in our discussions with Russia, bilaterally and with NATO Allies, we have first and foremost emphasised that our preference is for Russia to return to compliance.

The US has equally pushed for this as the preferred option and only formally announced its intention to withdraw in February 2019, following six years of discussions with Russia and

clear indications that a situation in which one side was complying with the Treaty and the other was not, was not sustainable. Even after strenuous diplomatic efforts, it was clear that Russia was still not prepared to address, or even admit to, its non-compliance.

Russia's violation of the INF Treaty is part of a broader pattern of Russian behaviour that is undermining Euro-Atlantic security. This is contributing to a more challenging security environment worldwide.

NATO is united on this issue and we are working closely with NATO Allies on the implications of new Russian capabilities for European security and will agree on how NATO should respond. We remain fully confident in NATO's capabilities and our ability to deter and defend against Russian attempts to undermine Euro-Atlantic security.

NATO took significant decisions to adapt its defence and deterrence posture at the Wales and Warsaw Summits, and did so again at the Summit last July. Allies will continue to keep NATO's posture under close review, but do not intend to deploy new land-based nuclear missiles in Europe.

37. The possible continuation of New START is a decision for the US and Russia, but the Government should make clear to the US Administration the value the UK attaches to this treaty being extended beyond 2021 and its importance to Euro-Atlantic security (paragraph 373).

New START has made a valuable contribution to international stability. The UK, along with all NATO Allies, supports its continued implementation and early and active dialogue on ways to improve strategic stability. We have encouraged both countries to consider this as a priority issue in their bilateral discussions, but it is a decision for the US and Russia to take forward discussions about extending the Treaty. We of course support effective arms control measures.

38. The world is dangerously close to an era without arms control, which would increase the risk of nuclear use. We urge the Government to support initiatives, including trust and confidence building measures, to achieve new arms control agreements in the context of a more multipolar world (paragraph 388).

39. The future of arms control is challenged by the emergence of certain new technologies. However, that it is difficult is no excuse not to try to develop arms control in the context of these technologies. Arms control agreements have overcome technological change in the past, and there is no inherent reason why this cannot be done again (paragraph 390).

44. The UK should propose that the impact of new technologies should be considered by both Nuclear Weapon States and Non-Nuclear Weapon States at the 2020 RevCon of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Ahead of this conference, the Government should set out its ideas on how to manage the nuclear risks associated with new technologies.

Combined response to 38, 39 and 44:

We remain committed, as do the US and other NATO Allies, to preserving effective arms control agreements. For arms control to be effective, all parties must respect their obligations. Russia's development and deployment of Treaty-violating missiles undermines the future prospects for other arms control. However, we will continue to support dialogue between the US and Russia on strategic stability and work with partners across the world to prevent proliferation and make progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament.

We are aware that new technologies are being developed that may not fall within the scope of existing arms control treaties, and that these could be used to hold the UK and its Allies at risk. We will work with Allies to review the implications these new technologies create, to consider how they might be brought into the scope of existing and new arms control agreements, and to ensure that the Alliance's balanced mix of nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities remains credible in this new security environment.

The NPT Review Conference provides another opportunity for discussions across the full range of disarmament issues, which could include the impact of new technologies, for both Nuclear Weapon States and Non-Nuclear Weapon States alike. For example, the UK has previously briefed the NPT on its work on identifying new technical solutions to verification challenges, as well as underlined its willingness to discuss risk reduction measures.

40. The 2020 Review Conference is likely to be challenging for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and will be affected by the global security situation. In particular, the Review Conference will be likely tested by the collapse of important non-proliferation and arms control agreements, and the perception of wider threats to the rules-based international order.

The UK remains committed to the NPT, which remains a cornerstone of global security, and we will continue to work with everyone for as positive outcome as we can at the 2020 Review Conference. This will not necessarily be easy, given the scope of the challenges, but we look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with all state parties on disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

41. The Nuclear Weapon States must, in good faith, address the dissatisfaction of Non-Nuclear Weapon States at the 2020 Review Conference, including by showing a demonstrable commitment to the disarmament pillar of the NPT (paragraph 398).

The NPT has been a huge success. Over the past fifty years, it has minimised the proliferation of nuclear weapons and provided the framework for extensive disarmament globally.

The UK has a strong track record on disarmament and remains committed to the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, in line with the principle of undiminished security for all. We are the only Nuclear Weapon State to have reduced our deterrent capability to a single system and our minimum credible nuclear deterrent is a responsible answer to the current and foreseeable international security threat.

Further demonstration of the UK's commitment to disarmament is contained in our draft National Report, which we tabled at the NPT Third Preparatory Committee in order to make the information available to all Non-Nuclear Weapon States ahead of the 2020 Review Conference. This includes the leading work by the UK on nuclear disarmament verification. We have encouraged all of the Nuclear Weapon States to submit similar reports in 2020 and the Nuclear Weapon States regularly discuss how to support the NPT via the P5 process.

42. The Government should make every effort to ensure that a Final Document to the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is agreed and avoid a situation such as that in 2015 when the UK was one of only three countries which prevented consensus being reached (paragraph 399).

The UK Government will engage constructively with all state parties to the NPT at the 2020 Review Conference and supports a consensus-based outcome. We hope that all states will

adopt a constructive attitude to negotiations, in view of the hugely positive contribution made by the NPT to global security and prosperity over the past fifty years. Regardless of the precise outcome, we are confident that the NPT will remain an effective and vital part of the international security architecture, as well as continuing its contribution to global prosperity through the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

43. We recommend that the UK, as one of the three depositary powers, should mark its political support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on its 50th anniversary by being represented at a high level (paragraph 403). The Government should consider representation by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs at the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. It should also support High Representative Nakamitsu's initiative to hold a ministerial meeting in advance of RevCon, by indicating the willingness of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to attend such a meeting

The UK's strong support for the NPT is well-known. UK ministers regularly underline their support for the NPT, for example, UK, US and Russian foreign ministers' issued a joint statement on the NPT's fiftieth anniversary of opening for signature in July 2018. We support the UN High Representative for Disarmament's suggestion of a high-level segment and will consider UK representation nearer the time.

47. As the only Nuclear Weapon State to have adopted a credible minimum deterrent, the UK should advocate reducing reliance on nuclear weapons, and outlining the conditions for moving towards credible minimum deterrence (paragraph 426).

As set out within our 2015 SDSR, the UK Government is committed to maintaining a credible minimum deterrent. While we respect other states' needs to maintain a defence system that provides for their security requirements, the UK continues to engage with all nuclear weapon possessor states to build the necessary mutual confidence and security environment to allow for nuclear disarmament.

48. The Government should consider proposing that Nuclear Weapon States' doctrines and postures, and increasing transparency through regular reporting on strategic weapons numbers, should be on the agenda for the next P5 conference. Such discussions could be a valuable contribution to transparency and should reduce the risk of miscalculation (paragraph 427).

The next P5 conference agenda will include discussions on a wide range of issues related to the NPT, including disarmament related issues. Previous agendas have included discussions on doctrines, postures and ways to increase mutual understanding and trust. However, if the dialogue is to remain honest and open, it requires a certain degree of confidentiality.

The UK Government will continue to fulfil its NPT reporting commitments and already provides a significant level of detail on its strategic weapons numbers. We encourage all of the P5 to table National Reports at the 2020 Review Conference.

49. The Government should consider clarifying its nuclear posture at the 2020 NPT Review Conference and encouraging other members of the P5 to take similar steps. This could include providing clearer negative security assurances, considering declarations of sole purpose and a no first use commitment, and further work on de-alerting. The objective should be to reduce the possibility of misperceptions and misunderstanding during a crisis (paragraph 428).

As previously mentioned, the UK's public policy on nuclear deterrence, our capability and force structure, which includes our declaratory policy, is set out in the 2015 SDSR and the 2006 white paper, "The Future of the UK's Nuclear Deterrent". In order to avoid simplifying the calculations of our potential adversaries, we remain deliberately ambiguous about when, how and at what scale we would contemplate use of our nuclear weapons. As these documents make clear, the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent is a political, not a warfighting tool.

50. The UK should use its chairmanship of the P5 group to encourage a more constructive tone and approach by Nuclear Weapon States towards advocates of disarmament at the 2020 RevCon. It should explore further engagement between the P5 and Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) on the disarmament agenda to bridge the gap between the P5 and signatories to the Ban Treaty. It should ensure that both NNWS and civil society are invited to engage in parts of any P5 meetings led by the UK (paragraph 429).

The Nuclear Weapon States remain committed to disarmament in line with Article VI and made a joint statement reiterating their support for the NPT during last year's UN General Assembly's First Committee. The P5 will continue to hold a regular dialogue with the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, which includes several signatories to the Ban Treaty. The UK will continue to explore ways to enhance P5 dialogue with both Non-Nuclear Weapon States and civil society ahead of the 2020 Review Conference.

51. Recent tensions between India and Pakistan demonstrate that it will be impossible to reduce the risk of nuclear use without engaging all nuclear possessor states. The UK should propose inviting India and Pakistan to meet the P5 on the margins of the next P5 conference. India and Pakistan have been included in discussions in the past, and this would be an opportunity to hold dialogue with the aim of reducing tensions and increasing understanding (paragraph 430).

The P5 Process is primarily a dialogue on NPT-related issues. India and Pakistan are not signatories to the NPT. Such an invitation would require the explicit agreement of all members of the P5.

52. The Government should continue to engage constructively with the President-designate to the 2020 Review Conference, and seek fully to engage the members of the P5 in preparations for this conference (paragraph 431).

The UK continues to engage with and support the President-designate to the 2020 Review Conference and will explore opportunities for further engagement with the members of the P5 ahead of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

54. The US's 'Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament' initiative could be a helpful part of the step-by-step process towards eventual disarmament. We recommend that the UK should engage fully with the initiative, to seek to make it a constructive forum for engagement between Nuclear Weapon States and Non-Nuclear Weapon States (paragraph 438)

We welcome the Committee's view of the US's Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative, and agree that the initiative is a positive step that could assist progress towards the UK's long-term goal of multi-lateral disarmament. The NPT recognises that improving the security context is an integral part of nuclear disarmament. We welcome the US taking a leading role in bringing countries together to discuss the security context and

ways to improve it. The UK intends to engage fully with the initiative and will be sending two senior officials to the first meeting in Washington in July 2019.

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