

**BASIC**



# Meaningful Multilateralism

30 Nuclear Disarmament Proposals  
for the Next UK Government

**BASIC AND UNA-UK**

Sebastian Brixey-Williams, Paul Ingram, and Nina Sofie Pedersen

**The British American Security  
Information Council (BASIC)**

3 Whitehall Court  
Westminster  
London SW1A 2EL

Charity Registration No. 1001081

T: +44 (0) 20 77663465  
[www.basicint.org](http://www.basicint.org)

**United Nations Association – UK  
(UNA–UK)**

3 Whitehall Court  
Westminster  
London SW1A 2EL

Charity Registration No. 1146016

© The British American Security Information Council (BASIC)  
and United National Association – UK (UNA–UK), 2017

The opinions expressed in this publication are the responsibility  
of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of BASIC  
or UNA-UK.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced  
or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or  
mechanical including photocopying, recording or any information  
storage or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of  
the copyright holder.

Please direct all enquiries to the publishers.

## The Authors

Sebastian Brixey-Williams is a Project Leader at the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) in London, where he works primarily on issues relating to disarmament and arms control. His research interests include emerging technological threats to ballistic missile submarines, the politics of UK nuclear weapons, and the nature and role of responsibility in strategic affairs. He is a member of the Executive Committee of British Pugwash, and holds a Distinction in International Studies and Diplomacy at The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, where he received the Postgraduate School's Prize.

Paul Ingram is BASIC's Executive Director. Paul has authored a number of BASIC's reports and briefings covering a variety of nuclear and non-nuclear issues since 2002. Paul has extensive media experience and formerly hosted a weekly peak-time talk show on IRINN (Iranian domestic TV News in Farsi) from 2007-2012, addressing issues relevant to global security. He also taught systems approaches on the flagship Top Management Programme at the UK Government's National School of Government from 2006-2012.

Nina Sofie Pedersen is a Research Assistant at BASIC. Her research focuses on the mitigation of nuclear weapons risk, nuclear verification and the IAEA, and the gendered discourses of nuclear weapons. Nina has completed a Master's degree in International Security at the University of Bristol, during which she focused on critical and reflexive approaches to risk and security.

## The British American Security Information Council (BASIC)

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) is a think tank based in Whitehall in London, taking a non-partisan, inclusive and dialogue-based approach to encourage stable global nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The organization works to facilitate constructive engagement between siloed communities on traditionally sensitive or complex issues of nuclear policy, to create space for new and diverse perspectives to grow from those interactions. Over the 30 years since the organization was founded, in 1987, BASIC has developed institutional expertise across a number of transatlantic issue areas, including the UK-US nuclear relationship, the UK's Trident programme, the politics of disarmament and arms control in the UK Parliament, NATO nuclear weapons in Europe, the Middle East, the evolving role of responsibility in nuclear governance, and expanding technological threats to SSBN platforms.

## United Nations Association UK (UNA-UK)

Founded in 1945, the United Nations Association – UK (UNA-UK) is the only charity in the UK devoted to building support for the UN amongst policymakers and the public. We believe that a strong, credible and effective UN is essential if we are to build a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. We advocate strong government support for the UN, stimulate discussion on practical solutions to global problems and demonstrate why international cooperation matters to people everywhere. Our members, supporters and local groups form a powerful network of global citizens with impact in the UK and beyond. Together, we've campaigned successfully for international arms control treaties, for more British peacekeepers, for children to learn about the UN at school and for greater transparency in UN appointment processes.

# Foreword

This report from BASIC and UNA-UK, published during the UK's General Election period, seeks to reframe the nuclear debate within the United Kingdom. Up until now, this debate has been dominated by the decision about whether to invest in a renewal of the Trident system, linked to political judgements about the responsibilities of governments to maintain strong defence capabilities. As a result, wider questions about how best to tackle global nuclear dangers have been neglected. This matters, particularly as the crisis with North Korea unfolds, but also as relations with Russia deteriorate and states frustrated with a lack of progress on disarmament begin negotiating a treaty to ban nuclear weapons without any nuclear armed states in the room. Commitment to the bargain at the heart of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, always a little shaky as interpretations of its priorities have been contested, could easily fray, with drastic risks to global security.

This issue sits within broader questions about the UK's role in the world. As we move through a period of growing instability, the need for effective international mechanisms to promote security is greater than at any other time since the UN was founded. Their success depends on states' willingness to work together. The increasingly fractious geopolitical environment, however, is impeding progress and putting further pressure on our post-war international system, already overstretched by the convergence of multiple crises.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a nuclear weapon state and one of the largest aid donors, the UK is an important player on the world stage. The international system has delivered prosperity and security for the UK as a whole. Its breakdown could have serious – and, in the context of nuclear weapons, existential – consequences for the country. Unfortunately, the UK has not been immune to the growing reluctance by states to invest in the continuing health of this system.

Over the past decade, voices calling for a narrower outlook have grown louder in this country, as in many the world over. But the line between national and global interests is disappearing. British foreign policy must embrace this reality and prioritise strengthening collective efforts to create a more peaceful world.

The ideas presented are the responsibility of the report's authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of the two organisations themselves. They are a menu of initiatives to demonstrate that in today's tough strategic environment, multilateral approaches have a chance of moving the agenda along. They show that whatever one's position on Trident, there remain many opportunities for the UK to provide stronger proactive leadership within this field. These ideas are compatible with the platforms of all political parties standing in this election, but are not drawn from any party's policies. If the political will to prioritise multilateral disarmament is applied, the UK could make a huge difference to the global capacity for security and stability.

**Dr Trevor McCricken**  
Chair, BASIC

**Lord Wood of Anfield**  
Chair, UNA–UK

# Contents

Introduction	<b>6</b>
Multilateral disarmament is in the British interest	<b>10</b>
What is meaningful multilateralism?	<b>12</b>
UK leadership in multilateral disarmament to date	<b>14</b>
Future UK leadership in multilateral disarmament	<b>16</b>
Conclusion	<b>28</b>
Summary of Proposals	<b>29</b>



# Introduction

The UK is currently engaged in a General Election to be held on 8th June. When the next government takes office, meaningful multilateral disarmament must be a high priority.

The need for nuclear disarmament through multilateral diplomacy is greater now than it has been at any stage since the end of the Cold War. Trust and confidence in the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime is fraying, tensions are high, goals are misaligned, and dialogue is irregular. Much of the attention is focused upon proliferation and particularly on challenges to the nuclear status quo from countries like North Korea, but the reality is that attachment to our nuclear arsenals is inextricably linked to our inability to persuade other states not to acquire their own. Previous governments of all colours have accepted this premise.

At times like this, it can be easy to feel lost for ideas and resigned to the apparent inevitability of conflict and mistrust. But there is much that can be done to engage

in multilateral disarmament, defined here as negotiated measures involving more than two states to reduce global nuclear weapons stockpiles and the salience of nuclear weapons within security doctrines. Over the years, numerous recommendations have been put forward by governments, UN bodies and officials, international commissions, academics, think tanks and NGOs, creating a wealth of resources for policymakers to draw upon. However, new times call for new advocacy of multilateralism and Britain has the opportunity to take the lead in advancing global stabilisation through decisive leadership and new initiatives.

Inspired political leaders can take these opportunities forward in a meaningful way. This report outlines what they are.



## Why has the agenda slowed, and confidence evaporated?

Internationally, relationships between the nuclear weapon states have deteriorated, in particular between the United States and Russia, and to some extent, China. This has stymied opportunities for mutually-beneficial outcomes. Among the publics within nuclear weapon states, consciousness of the dangers associated with nuclear weapons has significantly diminished since the Cold War ended. Reductions in nuclear arsenals and alert status throughout the 1990s slowed in the 2000s, and have been almost frozen since 2010. Instead, all nuclear-armed states are modernising their nuclear forces, at a worldwide cost of one trillion dollars per decade.\*

In the nuclear weapon states, attention tends to be focused on specific cases of proliferation concern, such as North Korea and Iran, at the expense of the bigger picture. The tug-of-war between multilateralism and unilateralism has turned out to be a grand and damaging distraction from the overall goal of global nuclear disarmament, an objective that ought to attract active and united support from across the political spectrum.

Nationally, when Tony Blair's government put its decision to renew the Trident system to Parliament in March 2007, it explicitly attempted to balance its decision with renewed proposals for multilateral disarmament initiatives. These included an explicit commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons, a call to other nuclear weapon states to step up their diplomacy, an officially-sponsored study by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) to chart possible paths to global disarmament, the launch of the UK-Norway Initiative on verification, and later the establishment of the 'P5 Process'. This attracted cross-party support, and when the Coalition government was created in 2010, Foreign Secretary William Hague quickly announced further warhead reductions and changes to posture, reflecting wider optimism in the international community that emerged from President Obama's 2009 Prague Speech on his vision of a world free of

nuclear weapons and the positive momentum of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the global environment has deteriorated and this enthusiasm has waned.

This report does not advocate for the unilateral disarmament of Trident. Whatever their position on the UK's Trident system most people and political parties are agreed that multilateral disarmament is a worthy objective and that its importance is growing.<sup>2</sup>

The world is closer to a nuclear exchange than it has been for nearly a quarter of a century, most of all in the worrying crisis around North Korea. Former US Defense Secretary William Perry claims that the risks are greater today than even in the Cold War.<sup>3</sup>

As the strategic relationships between nuclear actors and the relevant technologies continue to grow more complex, multilateral negotiations will demand more imaginative solutions. President Trump's clearly expressed willingness to engage in an open nuclear arms race and scepticism over the utility of arms control has brought further uncertainty, though it appears that the latter has also encouraged the Russian government to be clearer about its preference to maintain existing arms control arrangements.<sup>4</sup> As long as Russia and the United States fail to seriously engage in arms control and disarmament negotiations, it is difficult to see how those strategic relations will be improved and the emerging arms race stopped.

\* Bruce Blair, 'World Nuke Spending to Top \$1 Trillion Per Decade,' TIME, 4 June 2011, <http://ti.me/2pSsHVc>

## What this report does

In this shifting security, diplomatic, and political context, it is crucial that progress does not stall. The United Kingdom has the opportunity to show leadership on multilateral disarmament, and playing this role would be substantially in the British national interest.

This report offers 30 proposals drawn from or inspired by almost 30 years of scholarship on multilateral disarmament since the end of the Cold War. This includes all the major international reports in this field, such as the *Canberra Commission* (1996), the *Blix Commission* (2006) and the two *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons* (2009) publications, as well as a number of documents produced by the UK Government and UK institutions, such as *The Road to 2010* (2009) and *Lifting the Nuclear Shadow* (2009).

The report is intended to assist in the development of pragmatic proposals and meaningful engagement by the incoming UK government and other policymakers. It plays to the UK's strengths and offers tailored and implementable proposals.

1. Adrian Croft, 'UK sets limit of 225 on nuclear warhead stockpile,' *Reuters*, 26 May 2010, <http://reut.rs/2qe5Wry>.
  2. This near consensus risks being damaged by the election cycle recriminations linking support for (any) nuclear disarmament to weakness over national security and fitness to govern.
  3. William Perry, 'William J. Perry on nuclear war and nuclear terrorism,' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, last modified 8 December 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Q8YW9P>.
  4. Jeffrey Michaels and Heather Williams, 'The nuclear education of Donald J. Trump,' *Contemporary Security Policy* 38 (2017), 54-77.
- \* Overleaf: United Nations Secretary General, 'Secretary-General's Video Message to Opening of the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament,' *United Nations*, 24 January 2017, <http://bit.ly/2jVTAU7>.

---

## What are the UK's strengths as a nuclear weapon state?

- The UK is widely seen as one of the more progressive nuclear-armed states, having explicitly advocated for more engaged disarmament, reduced the salience of its arsenal, deployed nuclear weapons on a single platform, and engaged in 'minimum deterrence'.
  - The UK has a recent history of taking innovative steps in disarmament, including statements and studies supporting moves toward a world free of nuclear weapons, its founding of the P5 Process, and its cooperation with Norway on verification technology development.
  - British diplomacy is held in high regard in much of the world for its effectiveness and expediency.
  - The UK hosts renowned scholars and experts within its academic institutions, government and think tanks, who should be employed to expand and test meaningful, evidence-based proposals.
  - The UK has always taken its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) seriously. This is a good starting point to build on.
-



“Sabres have been rattled and dangerous words spoken about the use of nuclear weapons... Disarmament and arms control processes provide the breathing space for confidence to be built, stability to be strengthened and trust to be established.”

■ UN SECRETARY-GENERAL GUTERRES, JAN 2017



# Multilateral disarmament is in the British interest

Taking a leadership role in multilateral disarmament would advance UK interests at the national and international levels, by giving substance to its soft power aspirations, reducing mistrust, mitigating the threat posed by potential adversaries, and helping shape future security regimes to the benefit of nuclear and non-nuclear states alike.

## Sustaining UK influence over global governance

The United Kingdom is deciding what kind of state it wants to be in the future as it renegotiates its relationship with Europe and the rest of the world. While it has a legacy as a Great Power, and was instrumental in shaping of the current global order, its economy and military capacity is diminishing relative to those of rising powers and its traditional forms of hard influence are becoming less decisive. To retain its global standing and influence, as noted recently by the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence,<sup>5</sup> the UK should protect and advance the norms and international law that demonstrate that it is a responsible, internationally-minded state, many of which it helped develop. The committee also recommended investing in further forms of soft power, and seeking to build diplomatic and material support for international institutions.

## Ensuring security in Europe

The security context in Europe has deteriorated significantly in recent years, with the Russian annexation of the Crimea and an expanded NATO presence in eastern Europe. Statements from Donald Trump in the US election and afterwards have stirred uncertainties over the cohesion of NATO. The rise of far-right and fascist political actors in the European Union is further cause for uncertainty about security cooperation in the region. In the face of such instabilities, opening multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament would build bridges, trust and confidence.

## Rebuilding trust with non-nuclear weapon states

Many non-nuclear weapon states are in the process of negotiating a legally-binding prohibition, or Ban Treaty, on nuclear weapons in the United Nations. This was mandated in October 2016 by General Assembly Resolution L.41 with the support of

123 states. This approach arose from a deep frustration with the pace of the disarmament agenda, but has been opposed by the nuclear weapon states and most of their allies on the basis that it does not meaningfully account for their current security needs and threatens to distract from more 'realistic' initiatives. Ban Treaty advocates counter that such initiatives, while meaningful in their own right, have not seen progress. If the nuclear weapon states are to retain diplomatic credibility among the non-nuclear weapon states and many of their domestic publics, there needs to be a greater confidence in the possibility of progress in the NPT meetings, restarting this month and the UN High Level Conference on Disarmament planned for 2018. The UK is well placed to promote this.

## Restraining an arms race in emerging technologies

Digital technologies have revolutionised military capabilities relevant to strategic weapons systems and arms control has not kept up. Many of these technologies have been produced to fill perceived gaps in strategic parity, such as Russian and Chinese investment in ultra-high speed hypersonic re-entry vehicles to overcome US ballistic missile defence systems. Yet, each new technology that is developed drives its own arms race and complicates strategic stability calculations. These complexities make the early success of key multilateral disarmament goals all the more essential.

## A more stable world means a more stable UK

By stimulating international cooperation on nuclear disarmament initiatives, the UK can help reduce the threat of conflict and in doing so, help provide the stable international landscape upon which the UK's security and prosperity depends.

5. Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence, *Persuasion and Power in the Modern World* (11 March 2014, HL 150) (London: House of Lords, 2014), <http://bit.ly/2qfkeaC>.





# What is meaningful multilateralism?

Multilateral disarmament benefits everyone because it tackles the central concern we all share: global nuclear dangers and arms racing arising out of security dilemmas. It involves active diplomatic engagement to find common ground and make collaborative, mutually-beneficial moves towards reductions and the elimination of weapon systems.

## So, why do many people feel uneasy about the word ‘multilateralism’?

In the past, some politicians have publicly described themselves as multilateralists without having made any obvious effort to make progress in disarmament. This has led some to conclude that the term is simply cover for a position that is in fact pro-nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would describe herself as a multilateralist and accuse ‘unilateralist’ critics of naivety, but was said by her friend and former US Secretary of State George Shultz to have been furious when she heard that Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev were close to a historic bilateral deal to dramatically reduce or even eliminate their nuclear arsenals at Reykjavik in 1986.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Tony Blair frequently described himself as a multilateralist while making very limited progress in multilateral meetings.<sup>7</sup> Like previous governments, Blair’s administration engaged largely in unilateral initiatives, some of which were intended to encourage multilateral progress. As concrete diplomatic negotiations are largely held in private, it is easy to see why multilateralism is sometimes viewed as a cover for inaction.

Such associations are exacerbated by identity politics. There is a myth that politicians, policymakers, think tanks, NGOs, and citizens in favour of disarmament can be either multilateralists or unilateralists, but not both. Certainly, the symbolic labels of ‘unilateralism’ and ‘multilateralism’ are laden with longstanding ideological assumptions based upon a dualist approach to politics and particularly defence responsibilities, with both sides at times claiming a monopoly on morality and a unique willingness to take difficult, statesperson-like decisions. Yet, while self-identification with either camp can bring political capital, this false dichotomy pits communities with shared values around disarmament against each other over procedural differences that may be smaller than people think.

In the end, unilateralism and multilateralism describe only a set of tactics – and not necessarily a set of beliefs or identities – for the shared, overarching goal of global nuclear disarmament. The idea that an individual or government can only support one or the other is a construct, often pursued for other political purposes, and one that harms both approaches and disarmament as a whole.

Meaningful multilateralism is an approach to disarmament which seeks to move beyond party politics and stereotypes, and engage seriously with the rest of the international community. Multilateral negotiations can be complex and difficult, but successful multilateral treaties are negotiated every year. As in any multilateral negotiation, disarmament negotiations require commitment, patience and compromise from all sides. Meaningful multilateralism means giving international disarmament opportunities the creativity, good faith, time, staff, and material resources they need to succeed.

6. Oral history by George Shultz given to the BASIC Trident Commission in 2011. First mentioned in Sarah van Gelder, ‘No Nuclear Weapons,’ *Yes! Magazine*, 22 May 2008, <http://bit.ly/2moRz59>.

7. In fact, the UK Government has never agreed nuclear reductions in any international treaty, though it has agreed to limit its nuclear weapon-related activities under the CTBT.



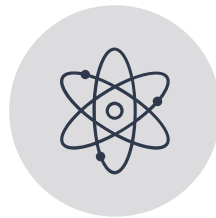
# UK leadership in multilateral disarmament to date

British governments have typically explored three types of leadership in nuclear disarmament:



## Diplomatic

Building upon the UK's historic diplomatic networks and relations



## Technical

Based upon the UK's strengths in science and technology



## Leadership by example

Reflecting the UK's aspiration to be viewed as a responsible power

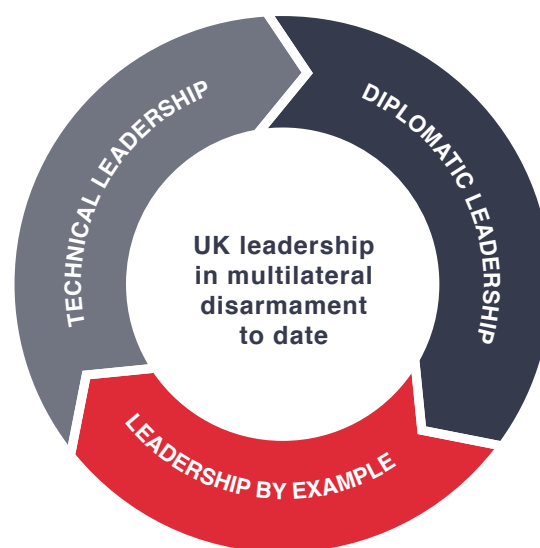


## Diplomatic leadership

Alongside other nuclear weapon states the UK is often seen as obstructive to disarmament efforts, and has never seriously considered full nuclear disarmament since it first acquired nuclear weapons in the 1950s. Nevertheless, it has been as driving force behind several multilateral treaties on nuclear weapons. Alongside the United States, the UK played a major behind-the-scenes role over several years to convince Libya to abandon its fledgling nuclear weapons programme, and was one of the key players in the E3+3 process that succeeded in negotiating the Iran Deal. In 2007, the UK was the first government to explicitly endorse the call for action to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, and the following year founded the so-called 'P5 Process', bringing together representatives of the five nuclear weapon states recognised under the NPT for private discussion of arms control and disarmament, though with limited public results. Previously, the UK was a member of the Norwegian-led Seven-Nation Initiative, an innovative non-proliferation initiative also consisting of Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Norway, Romania and South Africa, and the first that consisted of a mix of nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states.

## Technical leadership

The UK has devoted scientific and technical research to nuclear verification and the development of safeguards. In addition to independent research, the UK worked on verification collaboratively with the United States between 2000 and 2015, and became the first nuclear weapon state to work on verification collaboratively with a non-nuclear weapon state, Norway. It is now helping to found the Quad: a four-state verification research programme that will see the UK and the United States conduct further research with two non-nuclear weapon states, Sweden and Norway.



## Leadership by example

In stalemates of multilateral diplomacy, progress often requires one state to be the prime mover. Dr Andrew Cottey calls this 'reciprocal unilateralism' – unilateral measures in a multilateral context.<sup>8</sup> Leadership by example – where one state acts slightly in advance of others, but in doing so is able to positively influence their actions – should be squarely understood to be part of multilateralism's playbook, with a long pedigree amongst self-proclaimed multilateralist leaders such as Presidents Reagan, Gorbachev and George H.W. Bush, and Prime Minister John Major. The most notable were the unilateral Presidential Nuclear Initiatives by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in 1991 that led to the withdrawal of a large swathe of tactical nuclear weapons from active deployment in Europe. These were largely in recognition of the improved security context, but were also explicitly intended to improve trust and relations and lead to further disarmament.

8. Andrew Cottey, 'Multilateralizing Nuclear Arms Control: An Agenda for the P5,' *BASIC*, 29 June 2011, accessed 14 February 2017. <http://bit.ly/2mzNiJ0>.



# Future UK leadership in multilateral disarmament

## I. Opportunities for Diplomatic Leadership

### 1. Breathe new life into the NPT 2020 Review Cycle

The 2010 Review Conference (RevCon) unanimously agreed a 64-point action plan,<sup>9</sup> but there has been little progress on the agenda since then. The 2015 RevCon failed to agree a final document, symptomatic of the widening gulf amongst NPT members in their understanding of the Treaty's goals and purpose, and in the elusive search for compromise over WMD arrangements in the Middle East. Such divisions could affect the long-term efficacy of the non-proliferation regime, reducing the international community's ability to collectively manage nuclear proliferation.

The NPT needs a champion among the nuclear weapon states, a high priority role that the UK should fill in the run-up to the 2020 RevCon and beyond. It could do this by acting as a bridge between nuclear

and non-nuclear states, much as it did within the Norwegian Seven-Nation Initiative and interstate collaborations on verification such as the Quad (a verification initiative involving the US/UK/Norway/Sweden). The UK could apply to join the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) of states within the NPT, and associate more closely with the New Agenda Coalition of states, which has achieved much in previous years in pressing for disarmament but which needs dynamic leadership.

Drawing inspiration from the Humanitarian Initiative, the UK could hold a series of smaller meetings with key representative states to identify obstacles, competing commitments and progress on the 64-point action plan. The UK should take advantage of crowdsourcing and invite imaginative contributions from practitioners working across the world to inform both these discussions and the NPT Preparatory Committees (PrepComs) in 2018 and 2019.

## 2. Reform the ‘P5 Process’

The so-called ‘P5 Process’ was founded in 2009 as a forum for discussion on nuclear arms reductions between the five nuclear weapon states recognised under the NPT. To date, it has produced a Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms,<sup>10</sup> and a ‘standardised’ reporting form on current nuclear holdings, but few other public concrete results. The nuclear weapon states point to the challenges of building cooperation amongst five states with conflicting strategic interests, but the process is viewed by many non-nuclear weapon states as only paying lip-service to multilateral disarmament.

As the original proposer of the P5 Process, the UK has a particular responsibility to ensure that it plays a more effective role in responding to the urgent need of global multilateral nuclear disarmament, and should publish proposals for reform. The forum needs to strengthen its transparency in reporting the results of deliberations in order to demonstrate value (without compromising the benefit of closed-door discussions). It could formalise and expand the civil society meetings around the P5 meetings, include representative non-nuclear weapon states in some of its agenda (as the UK did when hosting the process in 2015), and advocate for a more ambitious agenda to address the core obstacles to global multilateral nuclear disarmament. Newer contested terms should also be defined, such as ‘minimum credible deterrence’.<sup>11</sup>

## 3. Convene a Nuclear Weapon States Study Group

Complementing the P5 Process, the UK could convene a study group comprising nuclear weapon state participants and a representative group of non-nuclear weapon state observers, who can both build their knowledge of the challenges of reaching global zero and ensure that negotiations are being conducted in good faith.<sup>12</sup> Meetings convened by the UK could take place in Geneva regularly, and function as a PrepCom for the P5 Process.

Primary topics for discussion could include:

- The impact of missile defence systems and other emerging technologies upon strategic stability.
- How to persuade Israel, India, Pakistan and the North Korea to join the P5 in progressing collectively to global zero.
- Verification issues, especially those relating to a global zero implementation plan and to compliance with a universal ban on nuclear weapons, once global zero had been achieved.
- The conditions necessary to move from the minimisation point to global zero without dangerously upsetting strategic stability.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4. Lead an assertive diplomatic push for full signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

The UK has signed and ratified the CTBT, but in order for the treaty to enter into force a number of key states need to do likewise. The United States, for one, has yet to ratify the CTBT. If it does, it is widely believed that other states whose ratification is required, such as China, will follow suit. This opportunity may not last forever, and it is very important that the CTBT comes into force.

Almost all US allies, some of whom are fearful of US disarmament in other areas, nevertheless support US ratification of the CTBT and its entry into force. They have not strongly communicated their preference for US ratification for fear of discouraging congressional leaders who are often resistant to undue foreign intervention on issues of senatorial responsibility.<sup>14</sup> There may yet be opportunities to persuade the Trump Administration to endorse CTBT ratification, particularly as the Nuclear Posture Review is under way and the Administration may look for bargaining chips and for a constructive legacy. It would have a far greater chance of passing through the Senate than during the Obama Administrations.

The UK Government should leverage the Special Relationship and place a priority on CTBT ratification in its communications with the Trump Administration, alongside other allies. North Korea's consistent and ill-advised nuclear tests are an incentive for the US to join the CTBT and further delegitimise the regime's irresponsible behaviour. If full ratification cannot be attained, the UK should seek to maximise the potential for the proposed CTBT to limit nuclear testing: by pushing for the provisional application of the CTBT,<sup>15</sup> by tabling a motion in the UN Security Council reaffirming its salience, and by enhancing sanctions against testers.

#### 5. Repurpose the Conference on Disarmament

The UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) is currently in deadlock, with progress on the proposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) blocked by Pakistan. Clearly, the situation demands a fresh diplomatic effort. The time could soon be ripe when Pakistan believes it has produced enough fissile material to allow negotiations to start, but there may be other, parallel measures that need to be considered to encourage Pakistan to compromise.<sup>16</sup> The UK should develop proposals to break the linkage between the issues in front of the CD, which presently prevent negotiations on any of them. Alternatively, the UK could recommend considering taking the FMCT negotiations out of the CD for negotiation elsewhere in the UN system or in a related multilateral forum on the model of the successful Ottawa Process to ban landmines.

#### 6. Push for adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) Guidelines

MTCR members agreed in a consensus decision in Oslo 2014 to encourage non-member states to make unilateral commitments to adhere to MTCR Guidelines and to install national export controls over anything covered by the MTCR regime.<sup>17</sup> As for the CTBT and the Additional Protocol, recent behaviour by North Korea should incentivise the UK to push forward with this agenda and invite compliance.

#### 7. Apply pressure to widen signature of the Additional Protocol

The Additional Protocol widens and complements the powers of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to conduct in-country inspections in states that have IAEA safeguards agreements, in order to enhance the efficiency of its non-proliferation activities.<sup>18</sup> The UK should consider stronger incentives to encourage non-nuclear weapon state hold-outs to sign an additional protocol with the IAEA. This will require linking up with other negotiations, such as a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East.

## 8. Promote Nuclear Fuel Assurances and Fuel Banks

The UK should continue to push for the adoption of Nuclear Fuel Assurances (NFAs), a form of contract pioneered by the UK and signed by suppliers and recipients of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) to guarantee an uninterrupted supply of LEU for civilian reactors. NFAs diminish the need for NPT non-nuclear weapon states to consider enriching their own nuclear materials, by increasing confidence in supply. Building international confidence in, and support for, the guarantees and the fuel banks will take time, and require credible assurances that they are insulated from sanctions and other political action. However, they are worth the effort as they could be critical to preventing the spread of nuclear weapon capabilities.

## 9. Buttress existing US-Russia disarmament and arms control treaties

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty is under serious pressure, with both the United States and Russia accusing one another of violations, and requires urgent attention if it is to be preserved in good faith. The breakdown of the INF would have grave implications for nuclear stability in Europe. Meanwhile, the New START Agreement between the United States and Russia appears more stable, in spite of recent rhetoric from the Trump Administration, but it is due to expire in 2021 unless extended by mutual agreement. Although these treaties are bilateral, they, as well as a number of others, are the architecture around which future multilateral agreements will be built. The UK must seek to defend these treaties by actively encouraging dialogue between the two states concerned.

The process of preserving these treaties will build trust and confidence between nuclear-armed states and their allies, and contribute to wider perceptions around the credibility of multilateral disarmament and arms control. As a European state and a member of NATO, the UK should use all means available to support the protection of the INF, including by leveraging its special relationship. It should simultaneously encourage the United States and Russia to extend the New START Agreement, or begin negotiations on a successor treaty.

## 10. Develop the Operational Plan (OPLAN 2045)

The UK should further develop its thinking on how best to contribute to longer term nuclear elimination planning. James E. Doyle, a former US nuclear laboratories employee, has proposed the formulation of an Operational Plan (OPLAN 2045) for nuclear weapons elimination.<sup>19</sup> The OPLAN 2045 would provide a clear framework for long-term strategic cooperation around nuclear disarmament, identifying concrete obstacles and the most effective routes to implementation. By formulating the plan in a multilateral setting, it would not be imposed on states and they could hold each other to account when they fail to live up to their commitments.

## 11. Require a special conference following any state's announced intention to withdraw from the NPT

Any state's withdrawal from the NPT can only be triggered if its supreme interests are threatened in the nuclear arena, and legally requires three months notice.<sup>20</sup> Such an action would shake the bedrock of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The UK should propose at the NPT RevCon 2020 the formal requirement of a special conference of the state parties to the NPT in the event of a state triggering the official process to withdraw from the Treaty, to address directly the threat to that state, and the threat its own reaction would have to the global security. Such a mechanism would provide a forum for states to reconcile their differences prior to any state party carrying through its decision to leave.



## 12. Revive the process to establish a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East

As one of the sponsoring states of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, the UK has a particular responsibility, alongside the United States and Russia, to drive progress on talks to establish a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East. Deep divisions between Israel and its neighbours, along with a conditional approach to talks, has blocked progress on the issue up to now, despite an extended diplomatic offensive by the UN-appointed facilitator during the 2015 RevCon cycle. There remains strong support throughout the international community for this initiative, and the UK should tap into this to reconvene talks, and in particular establish a dialogue with Israel on conditions to move forward. Imaginative solutions are needed, and steps previously off the table (such as Israel moving away from its policy of opacity) should be reconsidered.

## 13. Publicly and diplomatically defend the Iran Deal

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or 'Iran Deal' signed in 2015 was the result of many years of multilateral negotiation between seven states (UK, France, Germany, US, Russian Federation, China, and Iran). The deal firmly demonstrated that agreements can be reached and relations improved even when trust is very low. Yet, the JCPOA is now under threat from the Trump Administration, which is publicly attacking it and baiting Iran, just when Iran's own presidential election is approaching. The UK must work closely with the other parties to the deal to communicate its ongoing commitment to the Plan and encourage the Trump Administration to recognise its utility.

## 14. Push for a formal multilateral framework for the reduction of tensions on the Korean Peninsula

There is a real risk of a crisis on the Korean Peninsula. As the United States seeks to put additional pressure on North Korea, and indirectly on China, it risks creating a situation so unstable that it results in military action being taken, which could rapidly lead to a nuclear exchange. North Korean decisions about when to use nuclear weapons are taken by four people, whose temperaments and depth of contact with the outside world are shrouded in mystery; in such circumstances, the chance that miscalculation could lead to nuclear weapons use must be taken very seriously.

The UK is not a major player in the crisis, which is primarily being played out by regional actors and the United States, but as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council it has a duty to preserve international peace and security. In this capacity, the UK should lobby for a resumption of the Six Party Talks or a robust new multilateral framework for negotiation. Moreover, while the UK works closely with the United States, it pursues an independent foreign policy; it should monitor the pressure of the situation and use its special relationship with the United States to make high-level diplomatic interventions where necessary.

## 15. Explore information exchanges to build confidence for future disarmament

Opacity is the enemy of trust and progress in disarmament. States need to explore a more comprehensive exchange of information on each other's nuclear arsenals and stocks of fissile material to establish baseline data for nuclear weapon and nuclear-armed state negotiations.<sup>21</sup> This was initiated in 2014 by nuclear weapon state declarations to the NPT Preparatory Committee, but such declarations fell short of expectations and were not repeated by all nuclear weapon states. There should now be an effort to include all nuclear-armed states, including India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.



## 16. Include Disarmament in the title of the Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Arms Control and Disarmament Department was set up in 1968, the year the NPT was signed. Later it was renamed the Non-Proliferation Office and then the Counterproliferation Office. This reflected a significant evolution in emphasis away from disarmament towards more coercive prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons. It was again renamed the Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre in 2013, which is now managed jointly by the FCO, Ministry of Defence, Department for International Trade and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Within this Centre there is an Arms Control and Disarmament Research Unit, consisting of two staff members. There needs to be greater institutional and ministerial recognition that non-proliferation and disarmament are inextricably linked, which would be symbolised by including Disarmament in the Centre's name and expanding the staff size of the Research Unit.

9. United Nations, General Assembly, *Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* ('The 2010 NPT Action Plan'), NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol.I). (New York: United Nations, 2010), <http://bit.ly/1GlbjZo>.
10. *P5 Working Group of the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms*, P5 Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms (Beijing: China Atomic Energy Press, 2015). <http://bit.ly/2m20Eja>.
11. Harald Müller, *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*, eds. George Perkovich and James M. Acton (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), 177; Nick Ritchie, *Pathways and Purposes for P-5 Nuclear Dialogue* (London: European Leadership Network, 2013).
12. The Nuclear Weapon States Study Group concept was originally proposed by Ambassador Peter Jenkins, former UK Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency and other UN organisations at Vienna, and presently the Chair of British Pugwash.
13. International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, *Eliminating Nuclear Threats: A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers*, eds. Gareth Evans and Yoriko Kawaguchi (Canberra/Tokyo: International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, 2009), 3.
14. It was claimed that a joint letter from the government leaders of the UK, France and Germany in 1999 urging Senators to ratify the treaty when it came to Congress may have backfired.
15. Rebecca Johnson, *Embedding the CTBT in norms, law and practice* (London: United Nations Association, 2013), <http://bit.ly/2m7Ek87>; Oliver Meier, 'Toward a Joint Enterprise? Pragmatic Proposals to Reduce Nuclear Weapons and Improve the Conditions for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons,' in *Reviving Nuclear Disarmament: Paths Towards a Joint Enterprise*, eds. Oliver Meier and Elisabeth Suh (Berlin: Stiftung, Wissenschaft und Politik, 2016), 40.
16. International Commission, *Eliminating Nuclear Threats*, 22.
17. Missile Technology Control Regime, 'Public Statement from the Plenary Meeting of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Oslo, 3 October 2014.' (Oslo: Missile Technology Control Regime, 2014), <http://bit.ly/2l7JmC0>.
18. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Lifting the Nuclear Shadow: Creating the Conditions for the Abolishing Nuclear Weapons* (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2009), 17.
19. James E. Doyle, 'OPLAN 2045: Preparing for nuclear disarmament,' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. 28 November 2016, <http://bit.ly/2fMzaWp>.
20. Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission ('Blix Commission'), *Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Arms*, eds. Hans Blix et al. (Stockholm: Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, 2006), 51.
21. Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons ('Canberra Commission'), *Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* (Canberra: Canberra Commission, 1996), 65.

## II. Opportunities for Technical Leadership

### 17. Widen the development of verification and monitoring technologies

States generally require reasonable verification measures to be attached to their multilateral nuclear disarmament agreements in order to have sufficient confidence in other states' actions. Future agreements may require verification of the dismantlement and storage of warheads and other weapons components, and the destruction or conversion of related facilities. Verification methods may also integrate measures such as information barriers, designed to prevent the spreading of classified information and minimise proliferation risks during verification, particularly when international or non-nuclear weapon state inspectors are involved in the process.

Verification can be complex and must overcome multiple challenges. Yet in its final report, the UK-US cooperative program concluded that 'from a technical perspective ... monitoring and verification of nuclear warheads, components and sensitive processes is feasible.'<sup>22</sup> The UK has shown some signs of leadership in the development of appropriate technology for verification and monitoring, and reported regularly to the international community on its progress. Effective, reliable, and sustained investment and collaboration will be key to future leadership.

Nevertheless, perfect verification is impossible and cannot be a prerequisite for disarmament, as is often claimed. Rather, verification (both multinational and by national technical means)

should be viewed as both a substitute for and generator of trust. Initially, the less trust that exists, the more verification will be required. Over time, however, verification can help to create more trust,

which in turn will reduce the need for verification; President Reagan's adoption of the Russian proverb 'trust, but verify' demonstrated a base level of trust that helped kickstart a virtuous cycle between the Soviet Union and the US. Moreover, verification is not the only way to build trust between states, which can grow from political relationships, dialogue, and transparency.

The UK should:<sup>23</sup>

**A. Continue to plan, lay out, and review clear objectives and a programme of work** on its involvement in verification and monitoring, and report to the international community.

**B. Increase public funding for verification research, skills, and capacity in the UK**, as a matter of long-term national security. One way this could be achieved is through the establishment of a Verification Programme Fund administered by the FCO or the National Security Council. In addition, the UK could commit additional money to the UK Support Programme to IAEA Safeguards (UKSP).

**C. Reaffirm the UK's commitment to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**, by increasing funding to ensure that the IAEA's existing and future safeguard regimes are protected and effective, and to encourage allies (particularly the US, which currently is set to dramatically reduce its budgetary commitment) and other nuclear-armed states to do the same on the basis of collective interest. It could also propose measures that increase the international community's confidence in the capabilities and independence of the Agency.

**D. Explore concrete ways to increase official IAEA involvement and powers of inspection in disarmament verification**, to complement, augment, or improve upon bilateral verification regimes, through a structured international discussion.

**E. Continue to expand involvement of NPT non-nuclear weapon states in disarmament research**, using the model of the successful UK-Norway Initiative, to expand the human and technological resources available to verification monitors and enable verification to become a 'global collaborative endeavour'.<sup>24</sup> Ensure that the UK's future verification collaborations, such as the Quad, receive adequate resources.

## 18. Maintain international confidence in safeguards for UK civil nuclear facilities

The UK should prioritise and set out a clear roadmap for maintaining the level of inspections and other safeguards at British civil nuclear sites following the UK's exit from Euratom, which currently bears this responsibility. This will require extensive consultation on the necessary resources and responsibilities with Euratom, the UK's Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), and potentially the IAEA. Inspectors will need to be drawn from other countries to retain credibility. This is both an important counterproliferation measure and an opportunity for the UK to provide leadership in best practice by widening the application of safeguards,<sup>25</sup> perhaps even making them comprehensive and agreeing an Additional Protocol with the IAEA.<sup>26</sup>

## 19. Increase transparency by declaring stockpiles and operating records annually

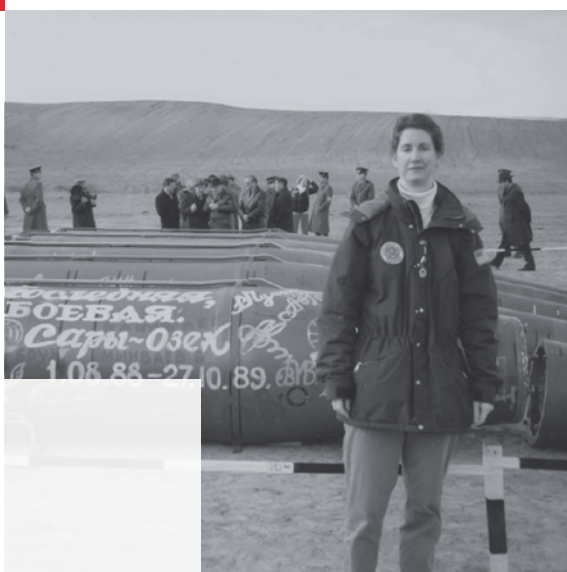
A comprehensive, annual declaration of the UK's nuclear arsenals, stocks of fissile material, and available operating records would establish baseline data for reductions negotiations with other nucleararmed states, building upon previous UK declarations to the 2014 NPT PrepCom and 2015 RevCon.<sup>27</sup> The UK could also explore how best to introduce international verification and monitoring of these declarations, through the IAEA.

## 20. Improve safeguards and transparency of UK naval nuclear propulsion plants

There have been multiple calls for states to unilaterally and voluntarily phase out the use of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) in favour of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) in naval nuclear propulsion plants (NNPP), which are exempt from IAEA safeguards inspections.<sup>28</sup> This exemption provides a loophole for potential proliferators, who could enrich HEU ostensibly for use in a naval reactor before diverting the material into a clandestine nuclear weapons programme without triggering safeguard alarm bells.<sup>29</sup> The UK should, therefore, strengthen the norm against naval HEU to close opportunities to exploit this loophole undetected. With designs already fixed for the *Dreadnought*-class, the UK will not be following the French example of moving to LEU in this coming generation of SSBNs, but could start the process of designing and developing new reactors using LEU when replacing its Astute class SSNs.<sup>30</sup> The UK will also need to explore how to apply best practice international safeguards and additional transparency measures to its NNPP HEU, as a first step to agreeing international safeguards of naval HEU.

## 21. Build the National Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security

The UK announced that it would establish a National Centre of Excellence for nuclear security in 2009 to enhance expertise around the important security of fissile and radiological materials.<sup>31</sup> It was intended to position the UK as an innovative leader in the field of nuclear security research and development, including nuclear forensics, which seeks to track illegally trafficked or exploded nuclear materials to their original source.<sup>32</sup> The Centre would have a secondary benefit to the UK as an incubator for talent in the nuclear sciences. However, the project was shelved due to budgetary cuts in 2010. The UK should now move to establish the Centre as soon as possible.



## 22. Invest in nuclear archaeology

Assessing historic fissile material production levels facilitates future disarmament verification and enhances nuclear security. Nuclear archeology is a branch of science that uses physical evidence to determine the level of fissile material production at a site, for instance in a nuclear reactor.<sup>33</sup> The UK should make long-term research investments in nuclear archeology and promote scientific collaboration between UK and foreign research institutes, primarily as a transparency initiative, but secondarily as part of a strategy to strengthen the UK's expertise in nuclear science.

22. National Nuclear Security Administration et al., *Joint U.S.-U.K. Report on Technical Cooperation and Arms Control* (Washington: U.S. Department for Energy, 2015), 2.
23. The following recommendations are adapted from: Brian Anderson et al., *Verification of Nuclear Weapon Dismantlement: Peer Review of the UK MoD Programme* (London: British Pugwash, 2012); David Cliff and David Kier, *Multilateral verification: Exploring new ideas* (London: VERTIC, 2012); David Cliff, Hassan Elbahtimy, David Keir and Andreas Persbo, *Nuclear disarmament verification: the case for multilateralism* (London: VERTIC, 2013); Verification Pilot Project, *Innovating Verification: New Tools & New Actors to Reduce Nuclear Risks: An Overview* (Washington: Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2014).
24. David Cliff and David Kier, *Multilateral verification*, 4.
25. United Nations, General Assembly, *2010 Review Conference*, 28.
26. Blix Commission, *Weapons of Terror*, 65.
27. Canberra Commission, Report, 65.
28. Independent Task Force on Naval Nuclear Propulsion, *Naval Nuclear Propulsion: Assessing the Benefits and Risks* (Washington, Federation of the American Scientists, 2015), 10. <http://bit.ly/2pmgSoT>.
29. Nick Ritchie, *The UK Naval Nuclear Propulsion Programme and Highly Enriched Uranium* (Washington, Federation of the American Scientists, 2015), 2. <http://bit.ly/1EFBDv6>.
30. Blix Commission, *Weapons of Terror*, 76.
31. Cabinet Office, *The Road to 2010: Addressing the Nuclear Question in the 21st Century* (London: Cabinet Office, 2009), 7. <http://bit.ly/2m9QJ5d>.
32. International Atomic Energy Agency, *Nuclear Forensics Support: Reference Manual* (Vienna: IAEA, 2006), 2. <http://bit.ly/2lksWSd>.
33. Steve Fetter, 'Nuclear Archeology: Verifying Declarations of Fissile Material Production.' *Science and Global Security* 3 (1993): 237. <http://bit.ly/2mAJelg>.

### III. Opportunities for Leadership by Example

Leadership by example is understood in this report as a careful unilateral action that is made to elicit a reciprocal response. Previous UK moves to reduce its nuclear arsenal have largely been more purely unilateral, in response to improvements in the security context and independent of the actions of others.

Leading by example sometimes gets negative press, primarily from those that believe it would be exploited by others and fail to maximise the UK's potential bargaining leverage. Such a transactional attitude frequently blocks progress on disarmament. A wider cost-benefit analysis might show that a small risk to the UK could bring about substantial benefits to confidence in global security and significant gains to UK soft power.

Rather than being stand-alone 'gifts' to the international community, however, these ideas need to be rooted in a broader strategy that elicits steps by other states. This approach is premised on tested conflict resolution methods.<sup>34</sup> Each one of these proposals could be declared in conjunction with a quiet but persistent diplomatic initiative to press other nuclear-armed states to follow suit, make parallel declarations, or explore a multilateral agreement.

#### 23. Issue sole purpose declaration

While the UK officially maintains an ambiguous posture, much of its domestic signalling and public discussion around Trident implies that the system has a sole purpose: to deter nuclear threats or use by other nuclear-armed states. However, this has not been clarified internationally, and the majority of states in the international community, which are not in the British mindset, have good reason to believe that the UK could use its nuclear arsenal aggressively and irresponsibly against them.

If the UK were to credibly clarify the purpose, it would tend to strengthen the legitimacy of its nuclear posture with the public, narrow its operational requirements, and diminish the security concerns of other states. A mutual sole purpose declaration (mirrored through operational practice, training, and general posture) would help improve crisis stability and greatly reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war.

#### 24. Adopt No First Use policy

The UK could additionally adopt an explicit policy not to use nuclear weapons first. Such a policy would make meaningful the UK's claim to operate a minimum credible deterrent, which involves posture as well as numbers. At present, the UK justifies its refusal to rule out the first use of nuclear weapons on the basis that an ambiguous posture complicates the strategic decision-making of potential adversaries.<sup>35</sup> However, ambiguity over first-use only has relevance to situations where the UK government would be prepared to threaten first use of nuclear weapons to deter conventional invasion or pre-empt a nuclear attack on Britain; neither of these hypothetical scenarios are credible and do not appear in the National Security Context assessment in the UK Government's 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review.<sup>36</sup> Instead, current policy could serve to obstruct opportunities for UK diplomacy. Indeed, an ambiguous policy increases the likelihood of UK submarines being attacked in a conventional crisis, which could lead to inadvertent escalation. In sum, establishing clear boundaries about when British nuclear weapons would and wouldn't be used is both more strategically responsible and optimal for national security.

## 25. Strengthen negative security assurances to states without nuclear weapons

The UK should issue firm and unconditional negative security assurances (NSAs) that it will not use nuclear weapons against any state without nuclear weapons. Currently the UK reserves the right to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states which it judges are not in compliance with their NPT obligations. This stance, rather than strengthening the nuclear taboo, gives political salience to nuclear weapons and makes them more attractive to other states. Such assurances would accord with the international norm and with strong public opinion on the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>37</sup>

## 26. Reduce stockpiles of fissile materials

It is unfortunate that while the US and Russia have gone a long way to reducing their (far larger) stockpiles, the UK has not followed suit.<sup>38</sup> The UK has already declared some of its military plutonium stocks as excess to national security and transferred them to its civil stockpile.<sup>39</sup> It should conduct a new review of its stocks and transfer further material, as it still includes a surplus of between one or two tonnes of plutonium.<sup>40</sup> This would reduce the proliferation risk inside the UK and the perceived need by potential adversaries to maintain equivalently excessive stockpiles as a hedge.<sup>41</sup> By conducting its reductions under IAEA safeguards, the UK would show further commitment to multilateral cooperation.

## 27. Explore further reductions in warhead numbers

There have previously been complaints that reductions in UK warheads, undertaken after government assessments concluded the arsenal was larger than operational requirements, have not been matched by reductions in other nuclear-armed states. Nevertheless, British nuclear reductions, in line with a policy of minimum deterrence, have strengthened its claim to provide some leadership in disarmament diplomacy. Since the UK is not in a position to closely negotiate away numbers with particular strategic rivals, there would be little loss from further reductions, if it could be shown that minimum credible deterrence was possible with fewer numbers.

## 28. Pledge not to increase warhead numbers and cap their yield

An explicit unilateral pledge not to increase warheads numbers and to cap warhead yield could restore some confidence in the UK's adherence to the spirit of the NPT, at little cost. Discussions should be held with other small nuclear states, such as France, to encourage them to follow suit.

## 29. Publish NPT Review Conference Contributions Reports

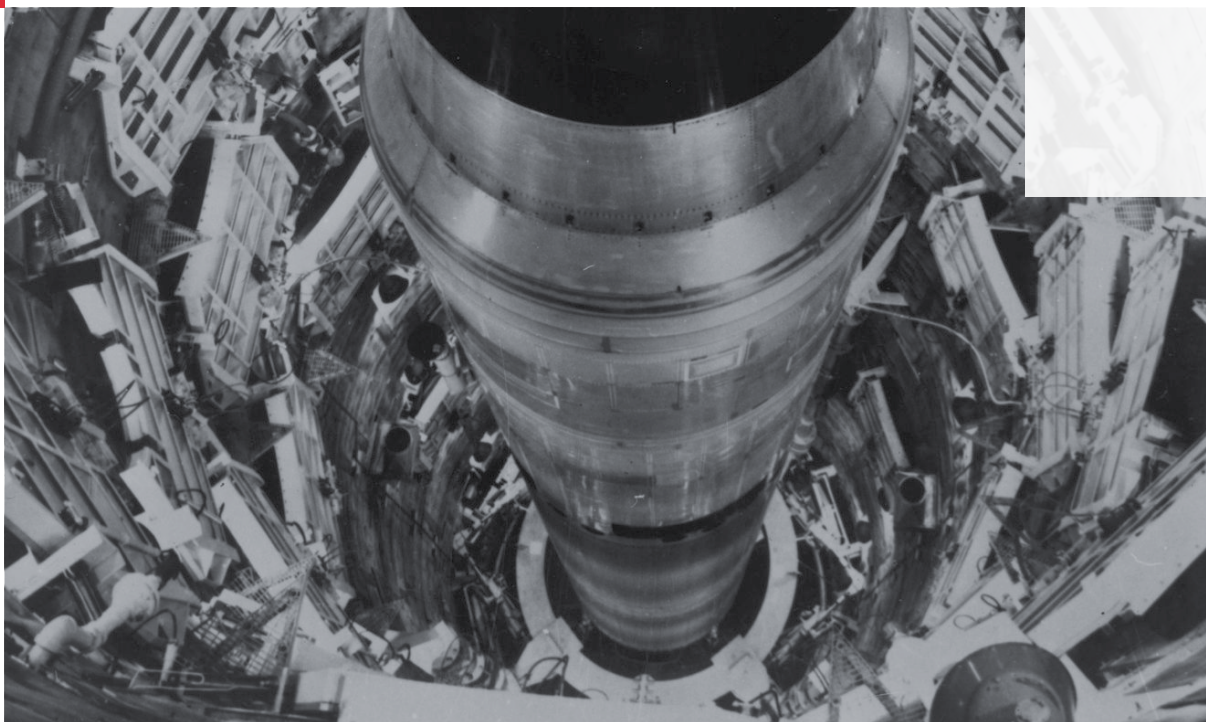
The UK should commit to publishing an annual report on the UK's contributions to the 2010 NPT Review Conference 64-point Action Plan in the context of progress internationally. While needing little resource investment, a framework of this nature would make multilateral disarmament progress more transparent, and build international trust in the British commitment.



## 30. Plan for a denuclearised UK security policy

The UK should instruct the Ministry of Defence to table alternative security arrangements that would allow the UK to transition at some point in the future from nuclear deterrence towards more sustainable forms of collective security. These proposals would need to include details on the geopolitical conditions that would facilitate such moves, and how UK policy could contribute to creating such conditions.<sup>42</sup> This might include a transitionary period in which nuclear weapons still exist but play a greatly diminished role in the national security strategy, such as a doctrine of less-than-Continuous At-Sea Deterrence (CASD) in which UK Trident submarines would not be put to sea at all times, moving on to various levels of virtual deterrence.<sup>43</sup> Such a process would necessitate high-level discussions within NATO about how best the UK could contribute to collective security without nuclear weapons.

34. Such as the GRIT method (Graduated And Reciprocated Initiatives In Tension Reduction) developed by Charles Osgood, which use virtuous cycles of reciprocity to achieve seemingly unachievable goals. Charles E. Osgood, *An alternative to war or surrender* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962).
35. '2010 to 2015 government policy: UK nuclear deterrent,' *Ministry of Defence*, last modified 8 May, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Q50BtP>.
36. Her Majesty's Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015* (London: HM Government, 2015), 15-22.
37. Carl Brown, 'Public Opinion about Using Nuclear Weapons,' *Roper Center for Public Opinion Research*, n.d., <http://bit.ly/2qfoVRN>.
38. Pavel Podvig, *Disposition of Excess Military Material* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2012), 2. <http://bit.ly/2pj5GYm>.
39. In 1998, the UK Government declared 0.3 tonnes of military plutonium as excess and transferred it to the civilian stockpile under safeguards. The Royal Society, *Strategy Options for the UK's Separated Plutonium* (London: The Royal Society, 2007), <http://bit.ly/2qm5Ugj>. The UK civil plutonium stockpile, however, is expected to reach 140 tonnes by 2020, at which point production will cease. This stockpile must remain under safeguards after Brexit, with commitments not to transfer any part of this stockpile into military stockpiles. Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), *Managing the UK Plutonium Stockpile* (PostNote 531) (London: Houses of Parliament POST, 2016), <http://bit.ly/2cd5vLa>.
40. International Commission, *Eliminating Nuclear Threats*, 25.
41. For a discussion around the challenges and opportunities of verifying national declarations, see: Pavel Podvig, *Verifiable Declarations of Fissile Material Stocks* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 2016), <http://bit.ly/2p4HBFT>.
42. Blix Commission, *Weapons of Terror*, 109; The British American Security Information Council (BASIC), *Trident Commission: Concluding Report* (London: The British American Security Information Council (BASIC), 2014), 39.
43. See Ian Davis, 'Paper 4: Later steps down the nuclear ladder: threshold status,' in *Trident Commission, Background Papers to the Concluding Report*, eds. Paul Ingram, Ian Davis and Matt Cavanagh (London, The British American Security Information Council (BASIC), 2014).



# Conclusion

This report maps numerous avenues for meaningful UK leadership in multilateral disarmament.

The proposals herein are actionable and supported by the scholarship and experience of leading institutions in the UK and abroad. The incoming UK Government should prioritise this work, drawing upon its own experts, external academics, and policy analysts to help it develop and implement these proposals, and by reaching out to its diplomatic partners to explore opportunities for cooperation and coordination. While the proposals can stand alone, pursuing them in parallel would bring further benefits: creativity through the cross-fertilisation of ideas, a greater retention of talent and skills, higher morale, and a higher likelihood of success.

Multilateral nuclear disarmament will inevitably be challenging. The long negotiating period will provide Ministers, the Ministry of Defence, and other areas of

Whitehall ample time in which to evolve and adapt Britain's national security strategy, never leaving the UK in a position of vulnerability.

But in the long-run, making meaningful progress on multilateralism is clearly central to the British national interest and to the interests of the international system that Britain helped found. In today's security context, progress is needed now more than ever. Many of these proposals are cost-neutral; some, such as the need to replace Euratom safeguards, are urgent. The incoming UK Government should grasp the opportunity to play a leading role.

# Summary of Proposals

## Opportunities for Diplomatic Leadership

1. Breathe new life into the NPT 2020 Review Cycle
2. Reform the 'P5 Process'
3. Convene a Nuclear Weapon States Study Group
4. Lead an assertive diplomatic push for full signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)
5. Repurpose the Conference on Disarmament
6. Push for adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)
7. Apply pressure to widen signature of the Additional Protocol
8. Promote Nuclear Fuel Assurances and Fuel Banks
9. Buttress existing US-Russia disarmament and arms control treaties
10. Develop the Operational Plan (OPLAN 2045)
11. Propose a United Nations Security Council Resolution establishing the requirement of a special conference of the state parties upon an announcement of any state's intent to withdraw from the NPT
12. Revive the process to establish a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East
13. Publicly and diplomatically defend the Iran Deal
14. Push for a formal multilateral framework for the reduction of tensions on the Korean Peninsula
15. Explore information exchanges to build confidence for future disarmament
16. Include Disarmament in the title of the Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre

## Opportunities for Technical Leadership

17. Widen the development of verification and monitoring technologies
18. Maintain international confidence in safeguards for UK civil nuclear facilities
19. Increase transparency by declaring stockpiles and operating records annually
20. Improve safeguards and transparency of UK naval nuclear propulsion plants
21. Build the National Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security
22. Invest in nuclear archaeology

## Opportunities for Leadership by Example

23. Issue sole purpose declaration
24. Adopt No First Use policy
25. Strengthen negative security assurances to states without nuclear weapons
26. Reduce stockpiles of fissile materials
27. Explore further reductions in warhead numbers
28. Pledge not to increase warhead numbers and cap their yield
29. Publish NPT Review Conference Contributions Reports
30. Plan for a denuclearised UK security policy

# Bibliography

'2010 to 2015 government policy: UK nuclear deterrent.' *Ministry of Defence*. last modified 8 May 2015. <http://bit.ly/1Q50BtP>.

Acton, James and George Perkovich. *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*. London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2008.

Anderson, Brian, et al. *Verification of Nuclear Weapon Dismantlement: Peer Review of the UK MoD Programme*. London: British Pugwash, 2012.

Blair, Bruce. 'World Nuke Spending to Top \$1 Trillion Per Decade.' *TIME*. 4 June 2011. <http://ti.me/2pSshVc>.

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC). *Trident Commission: Concluding Report*. London: BASIC, 2014.

Brown, Carl. 'Public Opinion about Using Nuclear Weapons.' *Roper Center for Public Opinion Research*. n.d. <http://bit.ly/2qfoVRN>.

Cabinet Office. *The Road to 2010: Addressing the Nuclear Question in the 21st Century*. London: Cabinet Office, 2009.

Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons ('Canberra Commission'). *Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons*. Canberra: Canberra Commission, 1996.

Cliff, David, and David Kier. *Multilateral verification: Exploring new ideas*. London: VERTIC, 2012.

Cliff, David, Hassan Elbahtimy, David Keir and Andreas Persbo. *Nuclear disarmament verification: the case for multilateralism*. London: VERTIC, 2013.

Cottey, Andrew. 'Multilateralizing Nuclear Arms Control: An Agenda for the P5.' *BASIC*. 29 June 2011, accessed 14 February 2017. <http://bit.ly/2mzNiJ0>.

Croft, Adrian. 'UK sets limit of 225 on nuclear warhead stockpile.' *Reuters*. 26 May 2010. <http://reut.rs/2qe5Wry>.

Davis, Ian. 'Paper 4: Later steps down the nuclear ladder: threshold status.' In *Trident Commission, Background Papers to the Concluding Report*, edited by Paul Ingram, Ian Davis and Matt Cavanagh, 26-31. London: BASIC, 2014.

Doyle, James E. 'OPLAN 2045: Preparing for nuclear disarmament.' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. 28 November 2016. <http://bit.ly/2fMzaWp>.

Fetter, Steve. 'Nuclear Archeology: Verifying Declarations of Fissile Material Production.' *Science and Global Security* 3 (1993): 237-259. <http://bit.ly/2mAJeJg>.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office. *Lifting the Nuclear Shadow: Creating the Conditions for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*. London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2009.

Gelder, Sarah van. 'No Nuclear Weapons.' *Yes! Magazine*. 22 May 2008. <http://bit.ly/2moRz59>.

Her Majesty's Government. *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*. London: HM Government, 2015.

Independent Task Force on Naval Nuclear Propulsion. *Naval Nuclear Propulsion: Assessing the Benefits and Risk*. Washington, Federation of the American Scientists, 2015. <http://bit.ly/2pmgSoT>.

International Atomic Energy Agency. *Nuclear Forensics Support: Reference Manual*. Vienna: IAEA, 2006. <http://bit.ly/2lksWSd>.

International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, *Eliminating Nuclear Threats: A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers*. Canberra/Tokyo: International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, 2009.

Johnson, Rebecca. *Embedding the CTBT in norms, law and practice*. London: United Nations Association – UK, 2013. <http://bit.ly/2m7Ek87>.

Lewis, Patricia, Beyza Unal, and Sasan Aghlani. *Nuclear Disarmament: The Missing Link in Multilateralism*. London, Chatham House, 2016.

Meier, Oliver. 'Toward a Joint Enterprise? Pragmatic Proposals to Reduce Nuclear Weapons and Improve the Conditions for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons.' In *Reviving Nuclear Disarmament: Paths Towards a Joint Enterprise*, Edited by Oliver Meier and Elisabeth Suh. Berlin: Stiftung, Wissenschaft und Politik, 2016.

Michaels, Jeffrey and Heather Williams. 'The nuclear education of Donald J. Trump.' *Contemporary Security Policy* 38 (2017): 54-77.

Missile Technology Control Regime. 'Public Statement from the Plenary Meeting of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Oslo, 3 October 2014.' Oslo: Missile Technology Control Regime, 2014. <http://bit.ly/2l7JmC0>.

Müller, Harald. 'The Importance of Framework Conditions.' In *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*. eds. George Perkovich and James M. Acton, 171-178. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

# Images

National Nuclear Security Administration et al. *Joint U.S.-U.K. Report on Technical Cooperation and Arms Control*. Washington: US Department for Energy, 2015.

Osgood, Charles E. *An alternative to war or surrender*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962.

P5 Working Group of the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms. *P5 Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms*. Beijing: China Atomic Energy Press, 2015. <http://bit.ly/2m20Eja>.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). *Managing the UK Plutonium Stockpile (PostNote 531)*. London: Houses of Parliament POST, 2016. <http://bit.ly/2cd5vLa>.

Perry, William. 'William J. Perry on nuclear war and nuclear terrorism.' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. 8 December 2015. <http://bit.ly/1Q8YW9P>.

Podvig, Pavel. *Disposition of Excess Military Material*. Geneva: UNIDIR, 2012.

Podvig, Pavel. *Verifiable Declarations of Fissile Material Stocks*. Geneva: UNIDIR, 2016. <http://bit.ly/2p4HBFT>.

Ritchie, Nick. *Pathways and Purposes for P-5 Nuclear Dialogue*. London: European Leadership Network, 2013.

Ritchie, Nick. *The UK Naval Nuclear Propulsion Programme and Highly Enriched Uranium*. Washington: Federation of the American Scientists, 2015. <http://bit.ly/1EFBDv6>.

The Royal Society. *Strategy Options for the UK's Separated Plutonium*. London: The Royal Society, 2007. <http://bit.ly/2qm5Ugj>.

United Nations, General Assembly, *The Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ('The 2010 NPT Action Plan')*, NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol.I). 18 June 2010. <http://bit.ly/2p568e9>.

Verification Pilot Project. *Innovating Verification: New Tools & New Actors to Reduce Nuclear Risks: An Overview*. Washington: Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2014.

The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission ('Blix Commission'). *Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Arms*. Stockholm: Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, 2006.

'Ambassador Malloy Witnesses the Elimination of the Last Soviet Short-Range Missiles Under the INF Treaty' by U.S. Department of State is licensed for reuse with modification under U.S. Government Works / Tinted from original.

'Conference on Disarmament at the United Nations, Palais des Nations in Geneva (3)' by United States Mission Geneva is licensed under CC by 2.0 / Tinted from original.

'Dmitry Medvedev in the Czech Republic 8 April 2010-10' by Presidential Press and Information Office is licensed under CC by 4.0 / Tinted from original.

'Elimination of Kh-22 air-to-surface missile under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program' by DTRA photo is licensed under CC by 2.0 / Tinted from original.

'Secretary Kerry Poses for a Photo With P5+1 Leaders and Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif Following Negotiations About Future of Iran's Nuclear Program' by U.S. Department of State is licensed for reuse with modification under U.S. Government Works / Tinted from original.

“Meaningful multilateralism means giving international disarmament opportunities the creativity, good faith, time, staff, and material resources they need to succeed.”

**The British American Security  
Information Council (BASIC)**

3 Whitehall Court  
Westminster  
London SW1A 2EL

Charity Registration No. 1001081

T: +44 (0) 20 77663465  
[www.basicint.org](http://www.basicint.org)

**United Nations Association – UK  
(UNA–UK)**

3 Whitehall Court  
Westminster  
London SW1A 2EL

Charity Registration No. 1146016

T: + 44 (0) 207 766 3454  
[www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)