

Evidence submitted by the Rt Hon Lord Owen CH FRCP

Should the UK remain a nuclear weapon state?

I do believe that the UK should remain a nuclear weapon state for at least the next 15-20 years.

If it should, is Trident renewal the only or best option that the UK can and should pursue?

I believe the Trident renewal is too costly and too sophisticated a nuclear weapon option for the UK and should not be pursued. But instead we should aim to replicate the US deployment of nuclear weapons on hunter killer submarines and draw on their experience in handling such a programme over the last 25 years, details of which can be found in my comments within my book, *Nuclear Papers* (Liverpool University Press, 2009).

What more can and should the UK do to more effectively promote global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and nuclear security?

I believe it is essential that if a non-nuclear weapons world is to emerge over the next 50 years then countries like the UK, with a minimal deterrent, should be charting a course which makes it possible to envisage abolition of nuclear weapons at least by the half-way 25 year mark if credibility is to be established in the policy. It is barely credible for such a policy if none of the existing nuclear weapon states are seen to be entertaining the possibility of withdrawal of their nuclear weapons and deeply damaging to the concept if the UK was to embark on a weapon that is designed to be still operating in 50 years time.