

**UN Security Council summit on nuclear disarmament and counter-proliferation  
(24/09/2009)**

***Statement by the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, UK Prime Minister***

With the unanimous agreement today, with the leadership of President Obama, and with the great speeches that have been made round this table, we are sending a united unequivocal and undivided message across the world today that we, as leaders of nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, are together committed to creating the conditions for a world free from nuclear weapons.

And today's meeting is also a recognition that we are at a decisive moment. We face the risks of a new and dangerous era of new state nuclear weapon holders and perhaps even non-state nuclear weapon holders.

So as we prepare for next year's Summit in Washington and the Review Conference of the Non Proliferation Treaty, and I am pleased to say with the advice that we have received from great Statesmen who are here today – Mr Schultz, Mr Perry, Mr Kissinger and Mr Nun – as well all the countries round this table, I believe we should be prepared to act now to renew and refresh for our times the global bargain that is at the heart of the Non Proliferation Treaty.

It's a bargain under which we affirm the rights and responsibilities of those countries which forego nuclear weapons and it's a bargain under which there are tough responsibilities to be discharged by nuclear weapon states.

And I think there are three elements to the renewal of the Non Proliferation Treaty:

- first, we have to be clear that civil nuclear power remains an essential part of any solution to the challenges of climate change and energy security, but that means that access to this affordable safe and dependable energy source must be expanded. And as we have heard from Africa today, we should be prepared to offer access to civil nuclear power to non-nuclear weapon states. In doing so, I believe we must, as an international community, be completely confident that we are able to ensure effective mechanisms for multilateral control of the entire fuel cycle, safeguarding fissile material, preventing proliferation with tough and immediate sanctions for those who break the rules. Our country has recently published ideas on how this might be done and how we might establish a new partnership between industry, academia and governments to solve the technical and policy challenges in this area, and I hope others will join us in this work;

- and second, accompanied with access of non-nuclear power states to civil nuclear power, we must strengthen the non proliferation regime. For increased access to civil nuclear power must not mean increased risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons. I believe the lesson of recent months is we cannot stand by when Iran and North Korea reject the opportunities of peaceful civil nuclear power and instead take steps to develop nuclear weapons in a way that threatens regional peace and security. Today, I believe we

have to draw a line in the sand. Iran must not allow its actions to prevent the international community from moving forward to a more peaceful era. And as evidence of its breach of international agreements grows, we must now consider far tougher sanctions together. I believe that in future, the onus of proof must be on those who breach the Non Proliferation Treaty and we must give the International Atomic Energy Authority the resources it requires to meet and discharge its responsibilities. I hope we can also make more progress on securing entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and make real advances on a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty and we must make collective action together to enhance nuclear security globally to ensure terrorist groups cannot get access to nuclear materials and I warmly welcome President Obama's initiative to hold a Summit on Nuclear Security next year. Today, the United Kingdom has deposited with the United Nations our instrument of ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Terrorism and I hope other countries will follow;

- but there is a third obligation in these future negotiations – nuclear arms states must pursue active disarmament with a credible roadmap that will command the confidence of all the non-nuclear weapon states. We should commit to making irreversible the steps on disarmament we've already taken, we should work together to map out the next steps on the road to the elimination of nuclear weapons, credibility is the key and the International Atomic Energy Authority already undertakes detailed inspection. We need to be more transparent if we are rapidly and verifiably to reduce nuclear weapons globally.

Now the United Kingdom has already taken some major steps towards disarmament – reducing by 75% the explosive power of our stockpile. France has made important progress too. And of course, the United States and Russia have made strong progress in negotiating a new START Treaty.

The current plan to reduce warhead stockpiles to less than 1500 should in our view be followed by further reductions of all nuclear weapon types. Thereafter, we believe in expanding the talks to include all other countries.

Britain is determined to play its part in full, making our determined part of a broader negotiation and we stand ready to participate and to act. And I pledge today that the United Kingdom will retain only the absolute minimum credible and continuing nuclear deterrent capability. And as a demonstration of that pledge, I can say that today, subject to technical analysis and to progress in multilateral negotiations, my aim is that when the next class of submarines enters service in the mid-2020s, our fleet should be reduced from four boats to three. I have therefore directed our National Security Committee to report to me before the end of this year.

This Conference today recognises we are at a watershed moment. The choices being made now by each nation will determine whether we face a future arm race or a future of arms control. But if we rise to this challenge, then our generation – a generation that has known all too often only the horrors of conflict and the perils of proliferation – will be remembered not for the years of tension, but for the years of progress and we will be remembered for the time we came together to secure the future of our world for

generations to come.

Thank you