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Submission to: Britain's Security: Labour Defence Policy Review

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This submission will address two key questions in the LDPR:

- The threats to Britain's security, and
- Your question: Will the renewal of Britain's nuclear capability aid us in protecting Britain's security and pursuing the values that guide our foreign and defence policies?

Our consideration will comprise the following sections:

- 1) Main strategic threats to Britain's security in the 21st Century
- 2) Risks arising from the possession, deployment and transporting of nuclear weapons, with specific reference to Trident
- 3) The humanitarian and security impacts of nuclear weapons
- 4) The security implications of nuclear deterrence
- 5) The impacts of nuclear deterrence doctrines on international nonproliferation, arms control and security.
- 6) Options and prospects for multilateral nuclear disarmament in the near future.

We will then provide our answer to the question you posed: Will the renewal of Britain's nuclear capability aid us in protecting Britain's security and pursuing the values that guide our foreign and defence policies? And finally we put forward some brief recommendations to plan for a future without nuclear weapons., including joining multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, acceding to a nuclear ban treaty as soon as feasible, and providing for the jobs, reskilling and steps to enabling Britain's defence establishment to transition from nuclear weapons production to achieving, maintaining and verifying security in a world without nuclear weapons.

Part 1) Main strategic threats to Britain's security in the 21st Century

1.1 The highest global, national, regional and local security risks will arise from pressures due to **climate and environmental disruptions** caused by decades of failure to tackle CO² emissions.

1.11 Climate disruption will have serious security implications in the 21st century, causing:

- more extreme weather and geophysical events, from violent storms to increased seismic activity that may cause more severe earthquakes or volcanic eruptions;
- increased problems of drought and desertification in some regions and flooding and inundation in others;
- disruptions to agriculture around the world, leading to food shortages and famine;

- severe, probably permanent coastal flooding affecting many countries, including some of Britain's most populated towns and cities;
- mass movements of people away from flooded areas within the British Isles;
- mass migrations of people fleeing from areas in other countries that have become uninhabitable or unable to provide food or work;
- increased conflict arising from pressures on land, food and other resources, which will increase the numbers of refugees fleeing violent conflict, hunger and reduced opportunities to work and provide for their families.

1.2 Increased conflict and increasing instability at home and abroad

1.21 Wars that develop in other parts of the world affect Britain's security in myriad ways.

Resource wars, wars to increase territory or annex areas considered valuable for economic development or resource exploitation, or wars fought for religious or ideological hegemony may occur between states or within or across state territories. Too often UK policies and military actions have exacerbated conflicts, including through providing armaments to one or more sides or groups of combatants. Even when the UK has not provided arms or become militarily implicated or involved, the world is an interconnected place, and Britain's security is likely to be affected by conflicts in other countries.

1.22 Warring parties may also seek to acquire and use chemical, biological, radiological (i.e. 'dirty bombs' made by igniting nuclear waste), or nuclear explosive weapons (CBRN).

- Regardless of whether used by government forces or non-state actors, CBRN use could have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, with high immediate injuries and death tolls, and medium to long term increases in illness and fatalities.
- Even large scale uses of "conventional" munitions would cause humanitarian, emergency and health services to be stressed to the point of breakdown, unable to provide adequate care for survivors.
- 21st century wars will produce long-term health and environmental effects, and if CBRN are deployed they would likely render large territories unsafe or uninhabitable, with the severity determined by the type of weapon, numbers used, targets and other factors.
- Cyber and related forms of electronic warfare could potentially turn nuclear weapons and power plants against the countries in which they are sited.

1.23 Even if wars are fought solely with "conventional" weapons, from machetes to guns, small arms and light weapons, to tanks, planes and anti-aircraft artillery (some of which may have been sold to some or all sides by British arms manufacturers), the likely consequences include:

- targeting women with rape, sexual violence and slavery;
- capture, enslavement and use of children, including indoctrination as child soldiers and (for girls) forced prostitution and marriage;
- murder of people of other religious or ethnic origins;
- cyber disruption and indiscriminate terror tactics and bombings, disrupting services, transport and agriculture, leading to social and political breakdown.

These consequences have security, gender and human rights impacts for British citizens at home and abroad.

1.24 All wars produce refugees and mass migration to parts of the world perceived as safer, putting pressure on local populations and resources and exacerbating political, economic and security tensions.

1.3 Large scale pandemics – whether naturally occurring or manufactured

Fast-transmitted diseases that global travel spreads around the world constitute another major threat. As illustrated by Ebola, SARS, AIDS etc., these are real threats that are more likely to occur unintentionally (i.e. not as deliberate weapons), though they may be triggered or spread widely by human activities or technologies, including genetic modifications and nano technologies.

1.4 Trafficking in arms and military equipment, people, drugs, explosives etc

1.41 Britain is one of the largest sellers of weapons and military and surveillance equipment in the world. These are sold to some of the most corrupt and dangerous militaries in the world.

1.42 The so-called "legal" arms trade is dominated by the United States, UK, Russia, China, France, Israel and Germany, who account for around three quarters of exported armaments.¹ These major nations produce and sell weaponry to buyers around the world (especially in the Middle East and South and East Asia), ranging from guided missiles and fighter aircraft to machine guns, rifles and torture equipment. Though deemed lawfully traded, many of these weapons are bought by human-rights abusing regimes and fuel conflicts, with arms going to aggressors as well as defenders. Many of the weapons also end up being trafficked on criminal blackmarkets that deal not only in arms, but also people, drugs, and equipment desired by aggressive militias and terrorists. The trafficking of people includes refugees and women and children for sexual exploitation.

1.43 The "legal" and "illegal/blackmarket" trading of weapons are closely connected. Both feed instability, insecurity and human rights violations. They constitute a growing security threat, as cause, factor and consequence of wars, conflicts, instability in so-called "failed states", and exacerbate domestic security threats, including violent crime and terrorism.

1.44 Trafficking contributes to the threats posed by terrorism and criminal gangs, including sabotage and attacks intended to cause mass deaths and injuries, and the grooming of young citizens to join violent groups based around extremist ideologies that are incompatible with human and sexual rights, equality, democracy, and multi-ethnic, multi-faith social structures and practices.

1.45 Defence policies should not be driven by arms production, sales and profits. These do not enhance British security interests, prestige or influence in the world, and are factors in causing and fuelling conflicts and creating or exacerbating domestic and international security threats. The legal as well as illegal arms trade, including Britain's role, is mired in corruption, distorting our economy and undermining human rights and democratic institutions and practices.

1.5 Further proliferation and erosion of the treaty regimes applying to CBRN weapons of mass destruction.

¹ See, for example, recent data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers) and the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT, www.caat.org.uk)

1.51 Biological and chemical weapons have been prohibited [through the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention respectively], and the stockpiles are being progressively eliminated. Though vigilance must always be exercised to prevent further production, deployment or use of such WMD, the existence of the prohibition treaties and regimes mean that a wide variety of national and international bodies can be involved in identifying, tracking and preventing activities that violate the treaties, and under the statute of the International Criminal Court, it is recognised that any use of biological or chemical weapons would constitute a crime against humanity and war crime. Anyone involved in any aspect of activity leading to an attack or threat of use of biological or chemical weapons would know that they could be held personally and legally accountable, a potent deterrent for many, and incentive for whistleblowers wanting to avoid the humiliation and penalties that would ensue.

1.52 Risk is a calculation based on both the the probability of a dangerous event and its likely impact/consequences. Among CBRN, the most serious ongoing risks for Britain arise from nuclear weapons. Most governments assume that the probability of nuclear use or accidents is "low", but since the consequences of any nuclear event would likely be catastrophic, the risks must be treated as significant for British and international security.

Part 2. Risks arising from the possession, deployment and transporting of nuclear weapons, with specific reference to Trident

2.1 As of April 2016, there are still over 15,500 nuclear weapons in the possession of nine states. While some are in storage, around 5,000 are deployed in military bases and transported by sea, land and air, involving around 30 countries as part of nuclear-based military alliances such as NATO.

2.2 The Trident nuclear weapons system currently comprises 4 nuclear-powered submarines, up to 40 US-made Trident II D5 missiles capable of carrying multiple warheads, and up to 160 nuclear warheads of around 100 kilotons each.

2.3 Nuclear weapons have not yet been prohibited and eliminated, and so constitute an ongoing risk to security as they are made, deployed and transported. Because of the complexities involved in manufacturing nuclear bomb materials (plutonium and highly-enriched uranium) and the means of effective delivery, the most likely route for terrorists to acquire nuclear weapon capabilities is to buy or steal the materials or weapons from existing possessors.

2.4 Nuclear weapons and technologies have continued to proliferate since enactment of the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), in part because the NPT "recognised" five "nuclear weapon states", and later treaty conferences linked nuclear weapons with "strategic stability". The NPT regime has had the unintended consequence of reinforcing perceptions that nuclear armaments conferred international status and encouraged the development and sharing of nuclear technologies for "peaceful purposes", not excluding uranium enrichment and the reprocessing of spent fuel to produce plutonium. Deterrence theories have thus been extended to justify the arsenals of five nuclear-armed states defined in the treaty, while spurring others – notably India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea – to reject the treaty's one-sided obligations on "non-nuclear-weapon states" and develop their own nuclear arsenals outside the non-proliferation regime.

2.5 Even before a nuclear weapon is fired in conflict, activities associated with UK possession, deployment and transporting of nuclear weapons pose significant risks to our security. While terrorist acquisition and intentional or accidental detonations of existing nuclear weapons and arsenals cannot be ruled out, especially taking into account the growth and spread of electronic and cyber expertise, the major risks to the security of people living in the British Isles come from the UK's own research, production, deployment and transporting of nuclear weapons, including the fully assembled warheads that regularly travel by public roads through England and Scotland.

2.6 Domestic nuclear weapons risks and dangers include:

- state-sponsored or non-state cyber attacks that compromise the command & control, safety and security systems;
- crisis escalation and miscalculations due to nuclear exercises, military-political crises and/or perception of threat from the UK by another nuclear-armed state which may launch a pre-emptive strike to neutralise the perceived British nuclear threat;
- miscommunication, miscalculation, human error or psychological impairment among crew or decision-makers;
- accident, for example during activities such as:
 - manufacturing and refurbishing nuclear warheads at the privatised Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) facilities at Aldermaston and Burghfield,
 - transporting warheads and explosives from AWE facilities in England to the RNAD warhead storage depot at Coulport,
 - fitting nuclear warheads to US Trident missiles at Coulport,
 - transporting the warhead-missile nuclear weapons system to and from the Faslane naval base
 - during sea-based deployment.

Accidents, sometimes involving collisions or fires, have occurred in all these UK nuclear activities in the past, and could be much worse in a future accident.

2.7 Radiological risks can arise from these kinds of nuclear accidents even if fission detonation does not occur. Radiological dispersal may also be caused by deliberate terrorist attacks that result in the ignition and dissemination of radioactive materials leading to contamination of inhabited areas. Radiological weapons are often referred to as "dirty bombs", and regarded as economic "weapons of mass disruption". They differ from nuclear explosive weapons because they do not produce the physical of flash and blast effects associated with atomic explosions.

2.71 Radioactive isotopes from nuclear detonations or dirty bombs, whether intentional or accidental, are highly toxic. Some are damaging but short-lived, like iodine, while radioactive caesium maintains potentially lethal toxicity over a generation. Plutonium remains a highly toxic contaminant for tens of thousands of years, with long-lived capabilities to cause cancer, cell and genetic damage.

2.72 Since 2001, and taking into account the growth of civilian as well as military nuclear activities, many analysts have increased their threat assessment with regard to radiological dangers.

2.73 Certain domestic or transnational non-state actors may be increasingly attracted to the idea of turning a country's nuclear materials and technologies against it, thereby creating high levels of terror and disruption due to long-term contamination as well as increased anxiety about radiation-induced illness, especially for children, whose bodies are

more vulnerable to the long-term effects of contamination. Unlike with nuclear weapons, terrorists would not have to buy or steal a nuclear device and find a means of delivery for its detonation.

2.74 Nuclear materials, whether in warheads being transported, or nuclear waste or facilities, constitute a terrorist invitation and increasing risk:

- Any military or civilian facility or transport involving nuclear materials can be turned into a radiological weapon if someone can get close enough to blow it up.
- The UK's dependence on nuclear energy and weapons creates many vulnerabilities that might be attractive to people who want to harm British people and our environment.
- Vulnerable sites include all nuclear reactors, the nuclear weapons facilities of Aldermaston, Burghfield, Coulport and Faslane, nuclear waste transports by road or rail, and the Trident nuclear warhead convoys.
- Attacks could be cyber or physical:
 - Cyber attacks might seek to employ electronic means to disrupt safety and containment.
 - Physical attacks could be by means of conventional explosives or air strikes that destroy containment at civilian or military nuclear facilities. If that is too technologically or militarily challenging, nuclear waste or warheads being transported through a city presents a vulnerable target that could be ignited by conventional explosives, causing plutonium, caesium and other lethal contaminants to be dispersed through fire, wind and/or water.

2.8 Intentional radiological attacks and nuclear accidents can cause similar kinds of economic and social impacts, creating fear by dispersing radioactive materials that are known to increase genetic and health damage over time. A city or area affected by a radiological weapon or accident would need to be evacuated, quarantined and cleaned up. Even then, fear for future generations could make it very difficult to recover, rebuild and resettle an affected location.

Part 3: The humanitarian and security impacts of nuclear weapons

3.1 Nuclear explosions are intended to cause mass destruction. If detonated, nuclear weapons would have catastrophic domestic, regional and global humanitarian impacts and consequences. These include high levels of immediate and longer term deaths and casualties. Depending on distance from the detonation (hypocentre), death or serious injury would arise from weapons effects such as:

- nuclear flash, causing everything near the hypocentre to be incinerated,
- blast, resulting in compression injuries and harm from collapsing buildings,
- radiation contamination and sickness, either acute or long-term, depending on factors such as weather, wind and a survivor's distance from the detonation.²

3.2 Nuclear weapons pose greater humanitarian and security impacts than radiological weapons if fired and/or detonated. Emergency services would be overwhelmed by just one

² See , for example, "Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons", Resolution adopted by the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Geneva, 26 November 2011. EN CD/11/R1

detonation in an urban area.³ Multiple detonations, such as Trident is designed to deliver, would be even more catastrophic, with likely long term impacts for the whole world.⁴

3.3 Depending on the number of weapons that are detonated, and where (especially whether urban or rural targets), multiple detonations and nuclear war, even if limited geographically, would cause widespread and severe contamination, disruption and socio-economic impacts, potentially leading to **nuclear famine**, which would be caused by a chain of climate and environmental effects:

- dust clouds being lofted high into the atmosphere from buildings and their contents, including people, destroyed by the blast, explosions and fires,
- climate chaos arising from atomic dust circulating in the upper atmosphere, blocking sunlight and causing perpetually darkened skies,
- freezing weather in many regions would ensue as global temperatures drop precipitously,
- severe and prolonged agricultural disruption, contamination and collapse of food resources;
- severe regional (probably global) famine that could last a decade or more.⁵

3.4 Wherever they occur, nuclear explosions will have serious impacts that are transboundary – not confined to the country or region in which the nuclear weapons are actually detonated. In addition to the direct deaths and injuries caused by nuclear weapons, humanitarian impacts and mass suffering are likely to result from the environmental and socio-economic impacts, including but not limited to:

- food riots,
- migrations out of contaminated and other affected countries and areas,
- disruption of economic activities, trade, health and environmental services,
- hoarding, black markets and trafficking,
- the loss of centuries of gains relating to democracy, human rights and development,
- further intra-state and inter-state wars, which might lead to further nuclear detonations.

Part 4: Security implications of nuclear deterrence

4.1 The stock justification for maintaining and renewing UK nuclear weapons is their assigned role in deterrence, which is also presented as an "insurance policy". In recent years successive governments and advocates of Trident renewal have argued that the UK needs nuclear weapons in order to prevent them being used, as if deterrence is an inherent

³ See Richard Moyes, Philip Webber and Greg Crowther, *Humanitarian consequences: Short case study of the direct humanitarian impacts from a single nuclear weapon detonation on Manchester, UK*. Article 36, February 2013

⁴ John Ainslie, *If Britain Fired Trident: The humanitarian catastrophe that one Trident-armed UK nuclear submarine could cause if used against Moscow*, Scottish CND February 2013; Philip Webber, *The climatic impacts and humanitarian problems from the use of the UK's nuclear weapons*, Scientists for Global Responsibility, February 2013 (revised from SGR Winter 2008); Rebecca Johnson, 'Unacceptable Risks: UK-relevant reports on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons'; and Frank Boulton, *Blood Transfusion Services in the wake of the humanitarian and health crisis following multiple detonations of nuclear weapons*, Medact, February 2013.

⁵ See Ira Helfand, "Nuclear Famine: Two Billion People at Risk", IPPNW, 2013 (updated from 2012); Owen B. Toon, Richard P. Turco, Alan Robock, Charles Badeen, Luke Oman and Georgiy L. Stenchikov, "Atmospheric effects and societal consequences of regional scale nuclear conflicts and acts of individual nuclear terrorism"; also Alan Robock, Luke Oman, Georgiy L. Stenchikov, Owen B. Toon, Charles Badeen and Richard P. Turco, "Climate consequences of regional nuclear conflicts", *Atm. Chem. Phys.* 7 (2007).

and failsafe attribute of nuclear weapons. It isn't.

4.2 Because nuclear weapons possession and deployment have in recent decades been equated with deterrence, it is necessary for the Labour Defence Policy Review to conduct a thorough analysis into the evolving theories of deterrence, and the mechanisms, practices and risks of reliance on nuclear weapons for this purpose. **The question "do nuclear weapons deter?" is one that needs to be asked, because the consequences of a nuclear deterrence failure are likely to be far more catastrophic than consequences of failure in other forms of deterrence.**

4.3 The majority of UN member states (over 150 out of 193) employ deterrence in a range of forms without any reliance on nuclear weapons, in accordance with rational security and defence doctrines and policies appropriate for their needs. These nations do not possess nuclear weapons themselves or engage in nuclear-armed alliances. These nations are law abiding parties to the NPT, and at the forefront of efforts in multilateral nuclear disarmament, including steps to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons for all.

4.4 Equating nuclear weapons with deterrence was driven by certain defence and academic establishments from the 1950s onwards. Though militarily flawed, the association continues to be asserted as a public relations strategy in the nuclear-dependent states to justify – and make more palatable – the growing costs, sizes and numbers of nuclear arsenals and facilities. Changes in nuclear weapons types and numbers tend to drive different deterrence postures, not the other way around.⁶

4.5 Deterrence as a component of military and security strategies involves the issuing of threats of violent retaliation that are supposed to convince any adversary to refrain from coercive or aggressive acts against the deterring country. Since overwhelming nuclear destruction is the primary deterrence threat being signalled, what kind of message is that sending about Britain's ethics as a member of the UN Community of States? In preparation and effect, nuclear deterrence requires the UK to threaten mass murder of innocent noncombatants (including children), environmental devastation on a massive scale, and our own probable national suicide. In order to make these threats appear convincing governments have to rob our own health, environmental and social services of billions of pounds so that the UK can have a perpetually armed nuclear force, and they have to put in place secretive plans and operations for deployment and use. Any failure of any component in the military and communications elements assigned to nuclear deterrence could lead to one or more nuclear detonations, causing humanitarian and environmental catastrophe.

4.6 In 2007, the retired US nuclear policymakers George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn noted that expecting nuclear weapons to provide deterrence is "increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective".⁷ In a later critique they described nuclear deterrence as "precarious" and "psychological, depending on calculations for which there is no historical experience".⁸

⁶ Commander Robert Green (Royal Navy, retired), *Security Without Nuclear Deterrence*, Astron Media, NZ, 2010.

⁷ George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, Sam Nunn and others, 'A World Free of Nuclear Weapons', *Wall Street Journal*, New York, 4 January, 2007. http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/NSP_ops_final_.pdf?_=1360883065

⁸ George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, Sam Nunn, *Deterrence in the Age of Nuclear Proliferation: The doctrine of mutual assured destruction is obsolete in the post-Cold War era*. *Wall Street Journal*, New York, 7 March, 2011.

4.7 The PR rhetoric from advocates of nuclear weapons portrays deterrence as a mystical property of nuclear weapons. It's not; deterrence is essentially a communicative relationship and security process between and among potential military and political adversaries, and may be applied to rivalry and disputes about territory, resources, regional power, ideological, religious or economic interests etc. While military threats can be a useful component of deterrence in certain circumstances, they may also result in unintended consequences, including miscalculations.

4.8 Creating uncertainty and fear in a potential aggressor's mind about the risks and consequences of threatening any vital assets or allies is assumed to induce restraint rather than increased insecurity. There appears to be little evidence on which to base such an assumption. On the contrary, uncertainty may increase the perils of crisis instability in which target states, regimes and actors fail to recognise a deterrent warning – especially if conveyed through a military build-up, exercise or demonstration – and instead perceive such actions as threats to their own interests and security. The immense destructiveness of nuclear weapons and short flight times mean that uncertainty can lead to pre-emptive strikes in a "use them or lose them" fog of war panic.

4.9 At the core of nuclear deterrence is the threat to launch weapons that would create massive "counter-value" destruction of cities, thereby causing an adversary's leaders to refrain from any aggressive acts they might be contemplating. Evidence from history and military psychology indicates that military and political leaders have not in general been deterred by adversaries' threats to besiege or annihilate their major cities. Evidence indicates that it would be foolish to rely on threatening cities as a clinching deterrent.⁹

4.10 One country's deterrent is another's dangerous threat. Due to misperceptions and miscalculations, threats that are intended to deter may actually provoke a State to launch a pre-emptive attack to neutralise a perceived threat that is not actual or planned. History shows how differently government leaders may perceive their own and an adversaries' actions. This could result in unnecessary military escalation and a destabilising arms race; and miscalculations involving nuclear weapons are most likely to prompt an adversary to take desperate risks or pre-emptive actions that could provoke war instead of deterring it.

4.11 As with all military and political strategies, deterrence doesn't always operate as anticipated, and is known to fail at least some of the time. Depending on the deterrence tools and threats utilised, a failure can either turn out to be surmountable or it may lead to conflict and war.¹⁰

Part 5: Implications of nuclear deterrence doctrines on non-proliferation, arms control and international security

5.1 Although the NPT enshrines a nuclear disarmament obligation in Article VI, a serious limit is placed on nuclear arms reductions by the theory and belief that to be credible nuclear deterrence requires arsenal sizes and operations that can convince adversaries that the ability to retaliate would be retained even after suffering a pre-emptive nuclear attack.

⁹ See Ward Wilson, *Five Myths about Nuclear Weapons*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012

¹⁰ For a more in depth analysis of nuclear deterrence see Rebecca Johnson's Written Evidence for the House of Commons Defence Select Committee On Deterrence and the changing role and requirements for security, September 2013.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmdfence/writev/deterrence/dic7.htm>.

5.2 There is growing evidence that the promulgation of nuclear deterrence doctrines serves as a proliferation driver. George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn also noted that "continued reliance on nuclear weapons as the principal element for deterrence is encouraging, or at least excusing, the spread of these weapons, and will inevitably erode the essential cooperation necessary to avoid proliferation, protect nuclear materials and deal effectively with new threats."¹¹

5.3 Nuclear deterrence arguments and operations undermine security, driving some to seek 'equalisation', for example, by massively building up other military capabilities, including cyber and space assets. In computer wargame trials conducted by the Pentagon, the use of weapons to neutralise the satellites on which most nuclear weapons rely for targetting and in-flight guidance led inexorably to the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear war on the ground. It was analysed that uncertainty arising from losing space-based "eyes and ears" caused miscalculations and led not to deterrence, but to rushed, panicky 'use them or lose them' decisions being made, with devastating consequences.

5.4 It should be noted that for much of the Cold War, cheaper and more accessible weapons of mass destruction (WMD), such as chemical and biological weapons came to be regarded as "poor man's [sic] nukes". However, the drivers for chemical and biological weapons proliferation have in the past 20 years been substantially eroded, in large part due to the way in which the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997, helped stigmatise those weapons and embed and oversee their prohibition – also stimulating further credibility and monitoring for the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), even if formal multilateral verification agreements were derailed by the George W Bush administration.

5.5 By contrast, the asserted 'promise' of deterrence through the acquisition and deployment of nuclear weapons has continued to play a significant role in driving proliferation decisions in today's nuclear-armed states, inside as well as outside the NPT.

5.6 For the 'nuclear-weapon states' defined in the NPT, the deterrence association continues to be both a factor and excuse for not moving more quickly towards compliance with the nuclear disarmament obligations in Article VI. Even where reductions have been undertaken by some nuclear-weapon states since the end of the Cold War, these have been offset by other NPT-undermining activities, including the development of enhanced nuclear weapons through arsenal 'modernisation' programmes, and the institutionalising of nuclear collaboration on warhead research and sharing of design technologies and facilities between some nuclear-armed states, such as the 2010 Teutates Treaty between Britain and France to institutionalise nuclear collaboration on warhead research and share design technologies and facilities, and the ongoing nuclear collaboration and missile transfers between Britain and the United States under the much-renewed 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement. Other NPT States Parties have frequently raised concerns that these nuclear cooperation agreements undermine the NPT, if not in text then at least in spirit and intention.

Part 6: Options and prospects for multilateral nuclear disarmament in

¹¹ George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, Sam Nunn, Deterrence in the Age of Nuclear Proliferation: The doctrine of mutual assured destruction is obsolete in the post-Cold War era. *Wall Street Journal*, New York, 7 March, 2011.

the near future

6.1 The UK claims that it supports multilateral nuclear disarmament, but for the past five years has been boycotting new efforts spearheaded by a growing number of UN Member states to kick-start multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, taking both the NPT and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) as their starting point. The most salient of these is dubbed "the humanitarian initiatives", which are laying the groundwork for negotiations on a universally applicable nuclear ban treaty under IHL to prohibit the use, deployment, manufacture, transporting and stockpiling of nuclear weapons as the next viable step to create the conditions for further agreements leading to the total elimination of all nuclear arsenals. Support has been growing among UN Member States and civil society for a first step or framework nuclear ban treaty, which could well be achieved in the next few years, even if states that currently possess nuclear weapons boycott the process.

6.2 The new humanitarian initiatives to ban nuclear weapons have their roots in the NPT, although British governments in recent years have dismissed them. The NPT Review Conference in 2010 endorsed a consensus expression of 'deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law,' and affirmed "that all States need to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons," giving consideration to "negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or agreement on a framework of separate mutually reinforcing instruments"¹²

6.3 Drawing from these NPT-related consensus statements, a series of statements and resolutions in the NPT and UN First Committee led to the Norwegian government hosting an international conference on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons in March 2013. Despite a boycott by the UK and a handful of other nuclear armed countries, 127 governments (including India and Pakistan) met in Oslo, together with representatives from civil society (coordinated by ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) and humanitarian agencies such as the Red Cross, experts on radiation, medical and large scale emergency response and management. Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, summed up the Oslo Conference conclusions thus:

- It is unlikely that any state or international body could address the immediate humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation in an adequate manner and provide sufficient assistance to those affected. Moreover, it might not be possible to establish such capacities, even if it were attempted.
- The historical experience from the use and testing of nuclear weapons has demonstrated their devastating immediate and long-term effects. While political circumstances have changed, the destructive potential of nuclear weapons remains.
- The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, irrespective of cause, will not be constrained by national borders, and will affect states and people in significant ways, regionally as well as globally.¹³

6.3 There followed two more international governmental conferences on this issue, hosted by Mexico in Nayarit in February 2014, and by Austria in Vienna in December 2014. After

¹² 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, NPT/CONF.2010/50 Volume I, Part I.

¹³ Espen Barth Eide, Chair's summary, Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons, 5 March 2013

the Vienna Conference, a growing number of governments have signed an **international Humanitarian Pledge to work together to "fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons"**. At time of writing (April 2016) 127 states have made this commitment.

6.4 In the **2015 UN General Assembly, 138 governments voted to establish an "open-ended working group" on "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations"**. The UK was among only 12 states to vote against, while 34 abstained. The UN working group duly convened in February 2016 at the UN's Palais des Nations in Geneva, with its UN General Assembly mandate and rules of procedure. While many of the NATO states who had abstained on the original resolution participated in the working group, which remained open to all UN member states, the UK and other nuclear-armed states chose not to participate. Some argued that the disarmament talks under UN auspices were illegitimate unless all participants were given a veto power, as happens in Geneva's Conference on Disarmament, which has been utterly paralysed for 20 years, because one state can block everything. At present Pakistan is blocking all efforts to negotiate a treaty on fissile materials, and this two-decade impasse does not appear likely to be resolved any time soon.

6.5 As the UN open-ended working group begins a further two week of talks in Geneva on 2 May 2016, the Chair (Ambassador Thani of Thailand) issued a synthesis of key arguments and recommendations from the first session, including the majority view that a "legal gap" does exist in the international treaty system with regard to the lack of clear legal requirements to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. There were different views on how to fill this legal gap, as some wanted to give priority to confidence-building measures, while others advocated negotiations "of a legally binding instrument or set of instruments for the prohibition of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination."¹⁴

6.6 The UN working group Chair's Synthesis Paper noted: "These negotiations should be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Delegations supporting this proposal also pointed to the lack of substantial progress in disarmament efforts, a fragile international security environment and the findings uncovered by the humanitarian initiative as strong motivating factors to commence negotiations as a matter of urgency".¹⁵

6.7 In addition, proposals were also put forward for various kinds of laudable steps that have been on the international agenda for a long time or, alternatively for a fully comprehensive nuclear weapons convention to be negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. While these two alternatives to a nuclear ban treaty have their supporters, they do not at present have a credible strategy for getting negotiations off the ground.

6.8 The nuclear ban approach, by contrast, has an achievable objective and strategy. Its proponents view such a treaty as a near-term interim step or building block that would accelerate nuclear disarmament by clarifying the legal status of nuclear weapons, strengthen the norms and tools to prevent intentional or accidental detonations, and

¹⁴ Chair's Synthesis Paper, Open-Ended Working Group, Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/ChairSynthesis.pdf>

¹⁵ Chair's Synthesis Paper, Open-Ended Working Group, Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/ChairSynthesis.pdf>

include non-NPT parties for the first time. It takes into account the obstacles that have stymied nuclear disarmament to date, including the structural obstacles and limited membership (just 66 out of the UN's 193 Member States) of the Conference on Disarmament, and the political status attached to nuclear weapons by their possessors and allies.

6.9 Framing disarmament as a humanitarian imperative means that the key actors change places. The negotiating power changes from the states that wield certain weapons to the majority of countries that do not. The guiding principles put human needs and security at the centre, not arms industries and militarist-industrial interests. The case for disarmament is then driven by governments who consider facts and evidence on the real, actual and foreseeable impacts and consequences of nuclear weapons, doctrines and policies. Their right and responsibility to take legal and diplomatic action to ban and eliminate inhumane weapons stem from every government's responsibility to ensure the security of its own people.

6.10 By prohibiting activities such as the use, deployment, transporting, stationing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, a nuclear ban treaty would create the normative and legal framework necessary for prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons, paving the way for further tangible steps. The strategy gives states that have already given up the possibility of making and deploying nuclear weapons the power to change the law, and therefore to affect the calculus of nuclear-armed states' decisions on nuclear weapons modernisation, expenditure, and nuclear deterrence. The negotiations would be open to all, but blockable by none. Undertaken in the context of International Humanitarian Law, a nuclear prohibition treaty contributes to arms control while upholding the legal and humanitarian responsibilities of all NPT states. It would also create important obligations for the states outside the NPT, drawing them into disarmament and IHL responsibilities for the first time.

Part 7: Will the renewal of Britain's nuclear capability aid us in protecting Britain's security and pursuing the values that guide our foreign and defence policies?

7.1 The short answer is no.

7.2 The longer answer, drawing from the foregoing analysis, is that renewing the UK's nuclear capabilities would have the contrary effect, making Britain's security more vulnerable and undermining positive humanitarian, rights and security values.

7.3 Nuclear weapons do not protect our security or further values of peace, justice, human rights or responsibility to protect. They are irrelevant for dealing with the actual and complex security challenges faced by Britain and the world in the 21st century. The presence of nuclear weapons in and around countries and areas engaged in conflict increases the risks of nuclear weapons use, blackmail, seizure or other dangerous consequences, and contribute to instability and incentives to develop nuclear weapons "for deterrence".

7.4 The major threats we face, described in Part I, require cooperative, transnational and collective security measures, requiring that we address the causes and invest in appropriate political, diplomatic and security tools and approaches. National nuclear arsenals make it more difficult to establish collective, multilateral security action involving other nuclear armed states and nuclear free nations on an equal basis.

7.5 As Labour's widely respected former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook argued in 2005, nuclear weapons are actually "worse than irrelevant" for British security, because they create additional security problems and divert resources and attention away from tackling the risks and threats that are salient and solvable.¹⁶

7.6 The current structure and politics of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control have done little in over 60 years to dent the value attached to nuclear weapons by those that have or desire them. On the contrary, even where there is recognition that such weapons of mass destruction are unusable in any rational military or security scenario, their holders claim that they must be retained and renewed because of their "necessary" political, deterrent and insurance "value."

7.7 The real drivers for acquiring, maintaining and renewing nuclear weapons are not national security, no matter what the political rhetoric suggests, but defence lobbies and nationalists seeking status and position vis-à-vis other political and economic parties. Nuclear weapons are sustained because they are thought to provide power projection and status for the 'haves', but in the real world nuclear weapons are viewed less and less as status symbols or effective tools for deterrence, and more and more as pariah weapons that drive proliferation and insecurity and need to be "stigmatized, banned and eliminated"¹⁷

7.8 With regard to proposals for replacing Trident with a smaller, cheaper nuclear weapon system, the Acronym Institute stands by our 2006 analysis of the flaws inherent in a variety of different nuclear options for renewing Britain's nuclear capabilities, including options for developing warheads for delivery by air-craft or dual capable cruise missiles. Whether or not these would prove cheaper (options have not been reliably costed), such alternatives would not enhance British security, being particularly vulnerable to risks of miscalculation, accident, seizure as well as exacerbating crisis instability.¹⁸

Part 8: Recommendations for stepping down the nuclear ladder to implement international legal obligations, strengthen the nonproliferation regime and protect Britain's security

8.1 The risks and consequences of nuclear weapons and their use and operations for nuclear deterrence are such that we have to conclude that nuclear weapons – of whatever kind – are a continuing problem for British and international security, and not an asset. It is past time for British defence policies to recognise that deterrence is more credible without nuclear weapons and that nuclear arsenals have no valid role in furthering human, British or collective security.

8.2 Signing contracts to renew Trident with any kind of nuclear weapon would waste national resources and taxpayers' money when most of the world is embarking on a diplomatic process to prohibit nuclear weapons as the next multilateral step to accelerate practical nuclear disarmament.

¹⁶ Robin Cook, *Worse than Irrelevant*, The Guardian, 29 July 2005,

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/jul/29/labour.politicalcolumnists>

¹⁷ Federal President of Austria, Heinz Fischer, High Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, New York, 26 September 2013.

¹⁸ Rebecca Johnson, Nicola Butler and Stephen Pullinger, *Worse than Irrelevant: British Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, Acronym Institute 2006

http://acronym.org.uk/old/sites/default/files/Worse_than_Irrelevant.pdf

8.3 Instead of trying to cling to out-dated status by renewing out-dated nuclear weapons, Britain could **gain international stature and influence by joining multilateral disarmament discussions and negotiations**, when established, and becoming the first nuclear-weapon state to comply fully with the NPT and related legal obligations.

8.4 If afraid to make a clear security, humanitarian, and legal case for Britain to take the necessary legal and ethical step of halting Trident renewal, the Labour Defence Policy Review should at least **argue for the UK to constructively engage in multilateral and plurilateral disarmament steps**, including negotiations on a nuclear ban treaty if initiated by other UN Member States; and **require that no more public or defence money should be spent on UK nuclear developments until the impact of current multilateral humanitarian-based disarmament initiatives have been assessed**.

8.5 **Current UN developments indicate that it is now highly likely that nuclear weapons will be banned in the next few years, whether the UK likes it or not.** It is therefore absurd and fiscally irresponsible for Britain to carry on with Trident renewal, at least until the outcome of nuclear disarmament negotiations are known.

8.6 Stepping down the nuclear ladder can be done in stages, but does not require spending public money on a further weapon system that we would not be able to legally deploy, let alone use, and which poses ongoing security risks for British people.

8.7 If the Conservative government tries to push through a premature decision resulting in 'Main Gate' expenditure on billion pound contracts for the Successor programme, it will be important to **demonstrate that Labour is the party of fiscal and defence prudence, as well as a more ethical foreign policy.**

8.8 To be ready for the likelihood that these international developments will lead to new multilateral agreements, the Acronym Institute recommends delaying the currently planned "main gate" decisions and expenditure, and joining the next round of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

8.9 Through **amendments to any government motion on main gate**, or through other political and parliamentary procedures, Labour should insist on a) a transparent process of consultation, democratic input and agreement regarding the signing of any nuclear-related defence contracts above £100,000; and b) prior to giving the "main gate" the go-ahead there must be a full and transparent parliamentary inquiry and assessment of current UN and multilateral nuclear disarmament initiatives to negotiate further international agreements to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons use, deployment, production, transporting, stockpiling and proliferation, fissile materials production, nuclear security with regard to the transporting of nuclear devices, and bringing the CTBT into force.

8.10 These assessments should be concluded before any further irrevocable contracts for the Successor programme are signed, and before further work on Successor is undertaken.

8.11 When the prospective nuclear ban treaty is adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, the future government would be in a position to renounce plans to replace Trident, and then take steps to shift from active nuclear weapons deployment to storage in a non-active form, pending complete elimination. If necessary, and depending on the obligations spelled out in a nuclear ban treaty, some nuclear warheads might be kept in

storage for a transitional period, perhaps as a kind of strategic escrow, to build confidence in security without nuclear weapons while preparing to complete the requirement for the total elimination of the nuclear arsenal. Agreement for this would need to be negotiated with the Scottish Parliament, as Coulport is the only viable storage location for this purpose.

8.12 If the time from now on is used wisely to plan for the UK's transition from a nuclear armed state to a defined 'nuclear-weapon state' in full compliance with the NPT, appropriate **research into alternative jobs should be undertaken in a timely manner.**

8.13 As soon as Britain takes steps to negotiate and become party to relevant new legal instruments and fully implement our NPT obligations, plans can be put in place to enable the businesses and local communities that are affected by nuclear disarmament steps to build alternative economic futures, with the help of retraining and regeneration schemes, encouraging relevant, peace enhancing and commercially viable industries to replace nuclear weapons manufacture.

8.14 To encourage the further step of agreeing a schedule for verified elimination of the banned weapons, **more resources and jobs should be invested in multilateral verification research and development**, an area of work where Aldermaston has strong credentials and international respect.

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