

Let us strengthen the cornerstone of our efforts to deliver a world free of nuclear weapons: Minister Stuart to UN General Assembly

Thank you Mr President,

Mr Tochytskyi,

We salute you, we salute the Ukrainian people as you stand up against aggression and oppression.

This Tenth Review Conference is long overdue, so I am pleased that we have finally come together to advance this vital work.

The United Kingdom remains firmly committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty.

That includes Article Six, and our ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

This Treaty is the only route to that goal.

Let me reaffirm the UK's unequivocal undertaking to achieve the total elimination of our nuclear arsenal, alongside the other Nuclear Weapon States.

Our National Report, published last November, outlines what we have done to implement the Treaty since 2015.

It demonstrates that we take our responsibilities as a Nuclear Weapon State seriously, and that we are committed to transparency and accountability.

Since the Cold War, the UK has dramatically reduced the number of its nuclear weapons, while de-targeting and de-alerting those that remain.

We are the only Nuclear Weapon State to have decreased our deterrent capability to a single delivery system. Indeed, ours is the smallest stockpile of any recognised nuclear state.

The UK will continue to play a leading role in disarmament by pioneering verification work, championing transparency and advancing risk reduction.

We will carry on pressing for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to enter into force and for negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

But as you all know, we have to acknowledge the growing challenges to

international security.

Last year, the UK published our Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

It described a deteriorating global security environment, increased competition, technological disruption and challenges to the international order.

Since then of course, we have witnessed Russia's unprovoked and premeditated assault on Ukraine, a sovereign, democratic, non-nuclear weapon state.

The United Kingdom continues to stand with Ukraine.

Russia's actions and irresponsible rhetoric raise questions about its commitment to international law and the fulfilment of its obligations, not least those under the Treaty.

Meanwhile, we are deeply concerned that Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to escalate their nuclear programmes despite calls to engage in diplomacy.

Today, we issued a joint Ministerial Statement with France and the US. This reaffirmed our January statement, made, you'll all remember, with the other nuclear weapon states, on preventing nuclear war. We also repeated our commitment to honour our national security assurances when given.

We will work with all States Parties to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict and enhance mutual trust.

Much of the Treaty's success in curtailing the nuclear arms race is due to the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards regime.

The UK will continue to champion this regime and indeed, the Agency, while working to enhance nuclear security by ratifying key conventions.

We remain committed to nuclear weapon-free zones. We have signed and ratified the Protocols for Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Africa, and Central Asia. We stand ready to do so for South East Asia as soon as possible.

As co-sponsor of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, we remain committed to a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, based on freely-made agreements by all the countries of the region.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty provides the framework for the safe, secure, and safeguarded transfer of peaceful nuclear technologies.

These technologies have the potential to improve lives around the world, particularly in the least developed countries.

This is why the United Kingdom alongside the United States has been consulting with States Parties on improved access to peaceful uses coming out

of those technologies.

We would like to see a new Sustained Dialogue, bringing fresh perspectives and identifying new opportunities to support peaceful uses across a number of areas.

At this Review Conference, the UK calls on all States Parties to work towards a meaningful outcome across all three pillars of the Treaty.

Let us be optimistic. Let us celebrate the NPT and renew our support for it. Let us strengthen it as the cornerstone of our efforts to deliver a world free of nuclear weapons.