

NFLA Policy Briefing No.185



Date: 4th January 2019

Subject: Submission to House of Lords International Relations Committee inquiry into the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Nuclear Disarmament

i. Introduction to the Briefing

This NFLA Policy Briefing has been developed by the Secretariat at the request of the NFLA Steering Committee to respond to a timely inquiry into UK and international nuclear weapons policy. The House of Lords International Relations Committee has sought a call for evidence to consider the increasing tensions with treaties around multilateral nuclear disarmament putting pressure on the future operation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which since its inception in 1970 has been the cornerstone agreement to encourage disarmament.

In 2017, led by core non-nuclear weapon states, two thirds of United Nations member states agreed to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Though supporters of this treaty claim it complements the NPT, others suggest it brings about further fragmentation and division over the longer-term aims to realise further significant reductions of nuclear weapons, particularly as the core nuclear weapon states and their supporters have consistently opposed the TPNW. The House of Lords International Relations Committee inquiry seeks to look at these and other concerning currents in nuclear weapons policy. This briefing sets out the NFLA's views on the issues raised within the Committee's consideration.

The closing date for consultation responses is the **18th January**. Responses should be sent via the web form at <https://www.parliament.uk/npt-nuclear-disarmament-submission-form>.

The NFLA Secretariat has liaised closely with members of the ICAN UK Steering Group in putting together this response.

ii. Background to the Committee inquiry

The motivation for the Lords inquiry is described in the preamble to the call for evidence.

The Committee notes: "As a result of rising tensions between nuclear-armed states and the fragmenting of existing non-proliferation and arms control agreements, nuclear weapons are on the international agenda in a way they have not been since the end of the Cold War.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), along with other components of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, form a critical pillar of the rules-based international order. Since the NPT's most recent Review Conference in 2015 there have been significant developments affecting the proliferation, development and use of nuclear weapons. The United States has taken the step of withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, opened negotiations with North Korea, and announced its intention to pull out of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) with Russia. Meanwhile, nuclear-armed states have begun significant modernisation programmes, with the United States and Russia signalling the substantial expansion of future capabilities and considering the use of nuclear weapons in the battlefield.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES: AN ICAN COALITION PARTNER, A NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE

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Rising nuclear tensions have been accompanied by a growing dissatisfaction amongst proponents of nuclear disarmament. In 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (commonly referred to as the Ban Treaty) opened for signature, further widening the divide between nuclear-armed states (and their allies) and proponents of disarmament.

In this context, the House of Lords International Relations Committee is launching an inquiry into the NPT and nuclear disarmament, during which it will examine the state of global nuclear diplomacy and the United Kingdom's role in it. During this inquiry the Committee will focus on the non-proliferation and disarmament aspects of the NPT, and not consider directly the civilian use of nuclear energy.

NFLA submission to the inquiry, based on the questions asked by the Committee

Nuclear risk

1. What is your evaluation of the current level of risk that nuclear weapons, of any type, could be used?

In the NFLA's view, while there remains no immediate prospect of a local or global conflict using nuclear weapons, the wider signs are of increasing tension in the international security sphere, along with the abrogation of important bilateral nuclear weapons disarmament treaties and a real sense of escalating division between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states.

The most obvious area of tension relates to the increasing pressures in the bilateral security relationship between the two largest nuclear weapon states – Russia and the United States – and moves from both of them to pursue a number of unilateral decisions that put under threat the structure of the wider disarmament architecture.

On the Russian side has been unilateral decisions to support armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, the annexing of Crimea, the alleged use of chemical weapon agents and the development of what could be a new generation of nuclear weapons. As recently as Boxing Day, President Putin was extolling the success of a new hyper-sonic nuclear-capable weapon called 'Avanguard'. This weapon was tested successfully in European Russia, hitting its target in Kamchatka 4000 kms away – therefore able to hit any target in Europe. (1)

While there remains some doubt the missile is as readily available as President Putin's confident assertions last month, this new type of nuclear-capable missile clearly increases the level of risk of a deliberate or accidental future use of nuclear weapons. NFLA and its partner, the Hiroshima-led Mayors for Peace (2), remains highly concerned with the 'modernisation' of all nuclear weapon programmes by the existing 'P5' states, which will do nothing to de-escalate concerns over a new arms race.

NFLA does not believe the US Government's response to plan to abrogate from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, following on from President Trump's decision to pull out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme, and rather placing harsh economic sanctions on Iran. Such an action, which may have as much to do with concerns over Chinese proliferation as of Russia, sends out the wrong message; rather that diplomacy remains the most effective tool to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. The NFLA fully supports the UK Government's ongoing support for the JCPOA, but is concerned that the Government has similarly not raised greater public concerns over the likely abrogation of the US from the INF Treaty, which has very much reduced the threat of a nuclear attack in Europe over the past 3 decades. Whilst Russia's actions are deeply disappointing at looking at creating new nuclear-capable missiles, the way to deal with this matter is to use diplomacy to manage and control this new threat through an instrument like the INF Treaty.

Ongoing reports in the specialist media also suggest that President Trump's National Security Advisor, John Bolton, is advocating that the US Government pulls out of the START agreements signed by President Obama and President Medvedev in 2010, which are up for renewal in 2020/21. (3) Such actions will weaken still further the nuclear disarmament architecture and reduce still further the effectiveness of the NPT agreements that have assisted in reducing over the past 50 years a significant number of nuclear weapons.

There still remains over 14,000 nuclear weapons in the world, over 90% of which are owned by the USA and Russia. While there remains currently a low risk from a nuclear weapon being used in a conflict, the risk still remains, and there has been a depressingly consistent halt to further cuts in nuclear weapons in recent years.

NFLA has also been, and remains, concerned about the potential for either an accidental use of nuclear weapons or the acquiring of nuclear materials that could be adapted into a nuclear type device. In 2016, it commissioned the independent nuclear proliferation consultant Dr David Lowry to consider the state of nuclear security in the world. His report (4) raised a number of real concerns over the potential for a non state actor to create real problems to defence nuclear facilities, attack a civil nuclear facility or acquire materials for a crude, nuclear type of device. Further details on this report are discussed in our response to question 6.

NFLA also remains concerned over the potential for an accident involving one of the nuclear weapon road convoys that regularly transport from West Berkshire up and down to Faslane and Coulport. The NFLA recommends the Committee consults ICAN UK's 'Nukes of Hazard' and the Nuclear Information Service publication 'Playing with Fire' about the potential problems that could occur with an accident involving such a convoy. (5) (6)

The NIS publication also outlines:

- 14 serious accidents related to the production and manufacturing of nuclear weapons, including fires, fatal explosions, and floods.
- 22 incidents that have taken place during the road transport of nuclear weapons, including vehicles overturning, road traffic accidents, and breakdowns.
- 8 incidents which occurred during the storage and handling of nuclear weapons, including instances when nuclear weapons have been dropped.
- 45 accidents that have happened to nuclear capable submarines, ships, and aircraft, including collisions, fires at sea, and lightning strikes. 24 of these accidents involved nuclear-armed submarines.
- 21 security-related incidents, including cases of unauthorised access to secure areas and unauthorised release of sensitive information.
- In addition, there have been 17 incidents involving US visiting forces and nuclear weapons in the UK and its coastal waters.

While the Committee is predominantly looking at a wider context to nuclear weapons, NFLA would suggest it also considers such serious internal matters as well.

- (1) Independent, 26th December 2018 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-putin-russia-hypersonic-new-nuclear-weapon-avangard-a8699506.html>
- (2) Mayor of Hiroshima's comment on the US plan to leave the INF Treaty, 22nd October 2018 http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/statement/protest/data/181022_INF_translation.pdf
- (3) Reuters, 22nd October 2018 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nuclear-trump-bolton/bolton-says-u-s-yet-to-finalize-position-on-extending-start-treaty-ria-idUSKCN1MW2J1>
- (4) NFLA Policy Briefing 145, 23rd May 2016 http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/A258_NB145_Nuclear_Security_concerns.pdf
- (5) ICAN UK, Nukes of Hazard, February 2016 <http://nukesofhazard.gn.apc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NoH-Report-Final.pdf>
- (6) Nuclear Information Service (NIS), 'Playing with Fire', 23rd February 2017 <https://www.nuclearinfo.org/article/nis-reports/playing-fire-nuclear-weapons-incidents-and-accidents-united-kingdom>

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

2. Ahead of the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), what are the biggest challenges facing global nuclear diplomacy?

The three biggest challenges facing global nuclear diplomacy are:

- The growing tensions between the United States and Russia noted above, which has seen the threatened abrogation of key disarmament treaties supportive of the NPT.

- The ongoing nuclear development programmes of states not in the NPT, particularly North Korea, but also other non-signatories to the NPT, as well as ongoing concerns of some kind of resumption of an Iranian nuclear weapons programme should the JCPOA fall apart.
- The growing impatience of non-nuclear weapon states and civil society to the long-term stalemate that has occurred within the NPT over the past 20 years, which has led to the development of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). NFLA remains very disappointed that the UK Government has failed to engage with this process and understood, or dealt with the deep frustrations of non-nuclear weapon states.

These matters will be considered further in response to the questions below.

a. To what extent do states still view the NPT as relevant?

The 'P5' nuclear weapon states, and their supporters within NATO and states linked to US security arrangements, still view the NPT as relevant and the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament architecture within a 'rules-based international system. However, the past four NPT Review Conferences have seen few concrete moves for further considerable reductions in nuclear weapons. Indeed, the moves amongst all 'P5' nuclear weapon states to modernise their nuclear weapon programmes, such as with UK plans for a Trident replacement scheme, very much go against the spirit of the 'good faith' agreements in Article 6 within the NPT.

It should therefore be of little surprise to the UK and other 'P5' members that the large majority of UN member states have moved so far forward in pursuing a parallel and quite different route in agreeing for a Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This movement comes out of the ongoing concern of the humanitarian consequences of even a limited nuclear weapon attack, the tragic experience of the hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as raised by the Mayors for Peace and other groups, as well as nuclear test veterans and others exposed to nuclear tests; and of seeing alarming changes as the post-Cold War security arrangements continue to fragment.

Whilst it is still correct to say that the 122 states that have agreed to the creation of the TPNW (70 have now signed it and 19 have formally ratified it) still actively work within the NPT disarmament architecture, this different process is their loud call to the P5 to get its act together and make some substantial progress in 2020.

As ICAN have noted, the catastrophic, persistent effects of nuclear weapons on our health, societies and the environment must be at the centre of all public and diplomatic discussions about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The NPT talks have so often got bogged down in technical niceties – at present in her oral evidence to the Committee the Foreign Office official could only offer a new glossary as the most obvious example of progress in the NPT discussions between the P5 – and while this has happened, the TPNW process has galvanised a large coalition of non-nuclear weapon states and civil society frustrated by lack of real progress with the NPT. Therefore, while the NPT remains relevant it has got to show new evidence of being a mobile and progressive way forward or that chasm between the P5 and non-nuclear weapon states will only get larger.

b. What are the prospects for other components of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT)?

NFLA notes the very informative comments provided to the Committee by Ms Izumi Nakimatsu, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the 12th December which noted some of the stresses in other parts of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

She noted to the Committee: "Some of the old or key bilateral disarmament and arms control agreements are being challenged, and that is directly affecting the work at the multilateral level."

Ms Nakimatsu noted the UN Secretary-General's initiative 'Securing our Common Future', which has much to commend it. NFLA supports its assertion that as Ms Nakimatsu said: "Given these environments and based on the recognition that, rather than disarmament and arms control being

a utopian ideal, if you will, we look at disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as a critical part of the international peace and security discourse.”

Within this resuming dialogue, restating important principles such as the non-use of nuclear weapons and standards for nuclear disarmament verification, as well as risk reduction measures to prevent a nuclear detonation, need to be made.

There is still little evidence that full ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) will take place in the near future. The Conference on Disarmament has been stalled for years, though NFLA welcomes recent moves from the Canadian Government to find ways around the impasse. The NFLA supports the UN Secretary General’s call for new and concerted action to bring these important treaties into force. Without that, there again remains little prospect for major progressive wider moves forward for the NPT.

Of greatest concern at present is the threats to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty following serious allegations of noncompliance made by both the US and Russia. This Treaty remains absolutely vital for European security and defence. If the INF Treaty is abrogated the real concern remains that nuclear weapons will once more start flooding back into Europe, whilst the growing tensions between the US and Russia cannot be helpful for a successful NPT process in 2020. The UK Government, with its partners in the EU, should look to provide an intermediary role to reduce tensions in this area and call on all parties to resolve these issues through a Special Verification Commission (SVC). The US abrogation from the Treaty will take effect as early as April 2019, so speed is of the essence to protect this important Treaty, which has done so much to reduce Cold War tensions in the 1980s and onwards.

- c. How important are these agreements to the wider rules-based international order?

All these agreements are essential to the wider rules-based international order. The fact that there either remains an impasse with bringing them into force, or some treaties are even under alarming pressure of collapse, is an important factor in the lack of progress in moving further forward in reducing the remaining 14,000 nuclear weapons in the world. This has to be a factor in the growing frustration that so many states have and why they moved forward with the TPNW process.

- d. To what extent does the existence of three nuclear armed states outside the NPT (India, Israel and Pakistan) destabilise the overall regime?

The potential for a conflict between India and Pakistan that could engage with their nuclear weapons programme still remains a possible scenario for even a limited nuclear war. It was used as such a scenario by IPPNW and other civil society groups in considering the humanitarian consequences of a limited nuclear conflict for the first international conference that led to the creation of the TPNW. There still needs to be effort made to encourage both states into the NPT, but the prospects at present remain low.

Israel’s nuclear weapons programme, which has never been publicly stated, remains of concern in reference to any potential for a Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. It is likely to have impacted previously on Iran’s interest in a nuclear weapons programme and the continuing tensions in the region. It remains of real benefit if they could be encouraged to join the NPT.

- e. What prospects are there for a Middle East WMD free zone?

There is very little prospect of a Middle East WMD free zone, which remains a real disappointment from the actions of previous NPT Review Conferences. The ongoing and bitter civil wars in Syria and Yemen have polarised states within the region, particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia. There is little likelihood of Israel seeking to change its own security arrangements due to wider tensions with neighbouring states. NFLA acknowledges the comments made by Ms Nakimatsu to the Committee that progress can only take place with renewed participation and engagement from all the relevant countries of this region.

The United States

3. To what extent will the United States' withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, as well as US efforts to achieve the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, affect the wider nuclear non-proliferation regime?

Only time will tell if the impact of the US unilateral withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, and its programme of economic sanctions, will have on whether the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) over Iran's nuclear programme will be maintained and stop any moves back to a potential nuclear weapons programme. It should be noted that regular reports from the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) state that Iran has been complying with the JCPOA.

NFLA welcomes the UK's ongoing support for the JCPOA as a core part of ensuring Iran continues to comply with the IAEA and does not seek to develop nuclear weapons. However, the economic pressure that US/international sanctions may place on Iran could well affect the Iranian Government's long-term stability and that could put at risk its nuclear non-proliferation policies. This has to be of concern, and the NFLA calls on the UK Government to monitor this issue closely.

While US actions in seeking denuclearisation in the Korean Peninsula (though it is also fair to note the positive role of the South Korean Government in this endeavour) has been more positive, there remains little direct evidence North Korea is actively reducing its nuclear weapons programme. Recent statements by the North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un, on frustration of the ongoing impact of economic sanctions on the country may affect its position on its nuclear programme, need to be considered carefully. Reports of a second summit with President Trump suggest more to the NFLA that the current agreements between North Korea and the US are under threat. The denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula is an example of the relative recent weakness of the NPT regime, which has not been able to bring North Korea into any meaningful process of nuclear disarmament.

The United States Government's apparent unilateralism in some areas of nuclear weapons policy is of concern for maintaining an international rules-based system. Renewed diplomacy is required to persuade the US Administration of the ongoing benefit of multilateral disarmament schemes.

Nuclear arms control

4. To what extent and why are existing nuclear arms control agreements being challenged, particularly the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) and the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), and what prospect is there for further such agreements? What prospects are there of progress in negotiating a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)?

See the response to question 2b above.

Nuclear modernisation programmes

5. What effect will nuclear renewal programmes have on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime? To what extent could technological developments—including in missile capabilities, warhead strength, and verification—undermine existing non-proliferation and arms control agreements?

Nuclear weapon renewal programmes have been a distinct factor in some of the growing frustration from both non-nuclear weapon states and civil society that partially led to the process that brought about the TPNW. Such programmes deviate from the spirit of the 'Good Faith Accords' in Article 6 of the NPT – a core part of the bargain within the NPT and between nuclear weapons and non-nuclear weapon states. The cost of these programmes – the UK's Trident replacement programme is tens, if not hundreds of billions of pounds – only exemplify the concerns that the P5 through this are paying lip-service to the international rules-based system. NFLA is completely and consistently opposed to Trident replacement.

As noted in the NFLA response to question 1 above, the development of a new modernised nuclear weapon programme by Russia is a core part of recent tension with the United States that could lead to the break-up of both the INF Treaty and the START Treaty.

As Ms Nakimatsu explained to the Committee in her oral testimony, such activity is early evidence of a potential new nuclear arms race starting. NFLA share her concern in this matter, and with any change of perception that nuclear weapons are a potentially usable weapon in a conflict. NFLA believe the UK Government must be kept aware of such concerns in its attempts to develop Trident replacement.

NFLA does welcome the positive work the UK has undertaken with Norway in improving verification programmes for nuclear disarmament. It encourages such work to continue.

New technologies

6. To what extent will technological developments, both directly relating to nuclear weapons and in the wider defence and security sphere, affect nuclear diplomacy?

In 2016, NFLA commissioned nuclear security expert Dr David Lowry to consider some of the nuclear security threats to the civil and defence nuclear sector. This report was difficult to put together due to the sensitivity of the subject matter and not seeking to be alarmist.

The threats that were considered in the report include:

- the risks to a nuclear site from an 'insider' attack;
- the risks from the loss of sensitive information on nuclear facilities;
- the risks from a 'cyber-attack' and attacks on information security at a nuclear site;
- the risks and potential damage from an aircraft attack;
- the risks from a malicious attack on a nuclear material transport;
- the risks from a 'drone' type device on a nuclear site.

The NFLA recommends that the Committee reads this report in full and suggests calling Dr Lowry and / or other nuclear security experts to learn further about the risks in these areas. The report is available at:

http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/A258_NB145_Nuclear_Security_concerns.pdf

Taking just one part of the NFLA report is the issue around cyber-attacks on nuclear facilities , and a report undertaken by Chatham House which found:

- The conventional belief that all nuclear facilities are 'air gapped' (isolated from the public internet) is a myth. The commercial benefits of internet connectivity mean that a number of nuclear facilities now have VPN (virtual private network) connections installed, which facility operators are sometimes unaware of.
- Search engines can readily identify critical infrastructure components with such connections.
- Even where facilities are air gapped, this safeguard can be breached with nothing more than a flash drive.
- Supply chain vulnerabilities could mean that equipment used at a nuclear facility risks compromise at any stage.
- A lack of training, combined with communication breakdowns between engineers and security personnel, means that nuclear plant personnel often lack an understanding of key cyber security procedures.
- Reactive rather than proactive approaches to cyber security contribute to the possibility that a nuclear facility might not know of a cyber-attack until it is already substantially under way.

Chatham House recommended:

- Developing guidelines to measure cyber security risk in the nuclear industry, including an integrated risk assessment that takes both security and safety measures into account.
- Engaging in robust dialogue with engineers and contractors to raise awareness of the cyber security risk, including the dangers of setting up unauthorized internet connections.
- Implementing rules, where not already in place, to promote good IT hygiene in nuclear facilities (for example to forbid the use of personal devices) and enforcing rules where they do exist.
- Improving disclosure by encouraging anonymous information sharing and the establishment of industrial CERTs (Computer Emergency Response Team).

- Encouraging universal adoption of regulatory standards.

The report also outlined the good progress that was made under President Obama's series of Nuclear Security Summits to take control of all nuclear material and improve nuclear security procedures. This urgency has disappointedly waned since his term of office ended, and it needs to be urgently revived.

In the report NFLA concluded that: "NFLA is concerned that the UK Government may be underestimating the serious threat to nuclear operations from determined malevolent actions of radicalised groups or individuals... In light of this, NFLA also urges that real discussion should be taking place between the Government and local authorities and emergency services on how all agencies would need to plan for the aftermath of a nuclear security incident, which could involve substantial amounts of people being evacuated, and medical services being potentially overwhelmed by the numbers of people contaminated by radioactive fallout."

NFLA still stands by such concerns, and encourages the Government to act upon the issues raised in its report, which was sent to it in 2016 and for which a formal response has never been provided.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

7. If it were to enter into force, how would the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (commonly referred to as the Ban Treaty) affect efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and bring about disarmament?

NFLA, through its membership of the Nobel Peace Laureate ICAN coalition, and in its strategic partnership with the Mayors for Peace, has engaged with the NPT for almost 40 years and also with the process that led to the TPNW since it began. In its view, the TPNW comes out of the intransigence of the P5 in recent years in not making major progress with the NPT disarmament objectives.

Since its inception in 1980, NFLA as a local government organisation has been concerned with the catastrophic humanitarian destruction that would be created by even a limited or accidental use of a nuclear weapon far more destructive than those that obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

The four International Conferences on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, and then the process that led to the agreeing of the TPNW in July 2017, were sadly boycotted by the UK Government and all the P5 members, as well as most NATO members. That was not just disappointing, it has led to ongoing and deep divisions on nuclear disarmament matters that can hardly be fruitful. In question 9, NFLA outlines how the UK should now engage with the TPNW process.

There are currently 70 states who have signed the TPNW, and 19 who have formally ratified it. ICAN calculate this is the fastest ratification of any of the treaties involved in arms control, such as the Chemical and Biological Weapons Convention or the Landmines Treaty. It is likely that before the 2020 NPT Review Conference the TPNW will have the requisite 50 ratifications to bring it into force. NFLA note that even in a number of NATO states, particularly Spain and Norway, there is some movement towards supporting the TPNW, and that both chambers of the Swiss Parliament have just backed the Treaty.

Whether 'P5' states like it or not, the TPNW inevitably changes the nature of the debate on nuclear weapons non-proliferation and should be seen in parallel with the NPT. The bitter divisions at the UN over the TPNW need to be resolved. NFLA welcomes Ms Nakimatsu's comments on the matter made to the Committee last month on this matter:

"Our (the UN Secretariat) appeal was that they (P5 states and their supporters) must stop attacking the Ban Treaty so that divisions do not deepen. In fact the divisions...will need to be bridged now; that will be an important element of the NPT Review Conference. My impression is that the core countries that have negotiated and promoted the Ban Treaty movement are fully aware and that they will not focus on the success of the NPT 2020. In fact, many of the countries that were part of the core group of the Ban Treaty are now also appealing to bridge the difference between the two

groups to make such that the complementarity between them will be understood by the opponents of the Ban Treaty.”

NFLA see such an approach as a practical way by which P5 Governments should look at this process and engage with it, not shout loudly about it from the sidelines. The fact that ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work to develop the TPNW is testament to the goodwill that exists to see meaningful multilateral nuclear disarmament, and that should not be forgotten.

The P5

8. What are the policies of other P5 countries (China, France, Russia and the United States), and the UK's other partners, on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and on nuclear weapons more generally? Have these policies changed, and if so, why? How effective has the P5 process been, and what role will it have in the future?

In their oral evidence to the Committee, the Foreign Office commented that the P5 still cooperate on progress with the NPT. There inevitably will be some divergence, but on the specific area of maintaining the NPT there appears to be a consensus between the P5. Whether recent issues over Iran and the JCPOA and on the INF Treaty will affect that consensus will be seen at this year's NPT Preparatory Conference in New York.

After good progress on nuclear disarmament in the 1980s and early 1990s, and again in the early years of President Obama's terms of office, there has been often glacially slow progress in recent times, and rather real concern over a new arms race. The NPT has been successful in keeping the amount of new nuclear weapon states to a comparatively small number, but that is by no means guaranteed for the future, particularly with real concerns of a greater propensity for unilateral action by a number of UN member states. The 2020 NPT Review Conference, on the 75th anniversary of the use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is more pivotal than ever, and should be seen by the UK and the other members of the P5 as one where it is seeking change and progress, rather than pursuing a state of ongoing stalemate. The TPNW shows the real impatience of much of the international community to such stalemate and NFLA argue that such concerns must be heeded by the P5 for the safe continuation of an international rules-based system.

The role of the UK

9. How effective a role has the UK played in global nuclear diplomacy in recent years? How could the UK more effectively engage on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament? What should the UK Government's priorities be ahead of the 2020 NPT Review Conference?

The UK's role in global nuclear diplomacy has been contradictory in recent years. On the positive side it has led progressive strategies like its work with Norway on nuclear disarmament verification. However, on the negative side it has proven intransigent for much more than tentative steps forward in disarmament, particularly with its vocal opposition to the TPNW. The Government has to engage with this process sooner than later and the NFLA notes comments made by the Labour Opposition, the Green Party and the SNP that is positive in each of them engaging with the TPNW in the event of a change of government. The UK Government has not really looked in any real detail about the gaps that exist within the NPT that could for example, leave to the creation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

In the NFLA's view the Government should therefore adopt a much more constructive approach towards the TPNW as we move towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference, and acknowledge it as a core part of the rules-based international system. Within such an approach it could, and should, take the following concrete steps:

- Attend future meetings of the TPNW as an observer state, to follow developments and avoid misconceptions.
- Provide technical expertise and other input within the TPNW framework where relevant, for example on: discussions of verification issues that will take place and on which the UK continues to do substantial work; and on activities to address ongoing human and environmental harm from past nuclear testing.

- Foster a dialogue with countries and organisations working on the TPNW on how the treaty can make an effective contribution to disarmament, including through making a positive, reinforcing impact on the disarmament pillar of the NPT.
- In the long term, the Government should work towards signing and ratifying the TPNW, as a treaty that provides a sensible and rational framework for multilateral disarmament.
- The UK Parliament, including its select committees, should provide support and scrutiny for the development of government policy in this area, and work to make the UK public more aware of the UK's commitments, these international developments, and the government position on them.

In addition the Government needs to work at ways to maintain multilateral cooperation at a time when a dangerous form of unilateralism is taking place amongst other nuclear weapon states. Above all, it needs to bring a new vision to the NPT that can move towards something much more meaningful than has been seen at NPT Review Conferences for many years.

There remains 14,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Whilst over 90% of them are in the hands of the US and Russia, the UK can still play a positive diplomatic role working for progress at the NPT by both engaging with them and the core states behind the TPNW for some constructive engagement at the Preparatory Conference this May. Part of this has to be a renewal of the international rules-based system which appears to be under real pressure at the moment.