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UK DEFENCE STRATEGY; A CONTINUING ROLE FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

1. It is sometimes said, historically, of military planners that they were well prepared to fight the previous war. In much the same way it is temptingly easy to say today, in the post Cold war world, that nuclear weapons were the solution to a problem that has gone away - and that we have simply failed to take account of the change. That there has been change, and change on a scale previously unimaginable, is beyond dispute. Charting a course into the future is a less certain business, but one we can ill afford to get wrong.

2. In this year's Statement on the Defence Estimates, entitled Defending Our Future, we set out our analysis of the implications of the changes in the strategic environment, and described our response. That analysis reaffirmed the role of Britain's national nuclear capabilities as underpinning our defence strategy, contributing to Alliance deterrent forces, and providing the ultimate guarantee of our security. Today I propose to explore in more detail the place that nuclear weapons have in our defence policy in this new environment. In doing so I am mindful that the fact that these issues and options are open to us at all is a tribute to the excellence of scientific endeavour in this country over many decades. The contribution that has been made, through our nuclear weapon programme, to stability in the world should never be forgotten.

3. In tackling this theme I intend in particular to address what might be seen by some today as a paradox in our policy. On the one hand, nuclear weapons have played, and continue to play, a fundamental role in perhaps the most effective system of war-prevention of modern times - the Atlantic Alliance. On the other hand, we and the world community recoil at the thought of

widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons. In terms of our security interests, therefore, nuclear weapons could be said to be simultaneously part of the solution and part of the problem.

4. I shall start by talking about the relevance of nuclear weapons to the international security environment as it now exists after the end of the Cold War. Then I shall look at what these developments in the international security situation mean for the United Kingdom's nuclear policy. Finally, I shall explain the action we are taking in adapting to these new circumstances.

5. I acknowledge that there are some who have always regarded nuclear weapons as an unmitigated evil, whose destructiveness would make their use, the deterrent threat of their use and even their possession, morally wrong in any circumstances. I also recognise that there may be others who accepted that the particular circumstances of the Cold War made nuclear weapons a necessary evil, but who would argue that the justification for retaining them has now gone. In contrast with these views I intend to show why the possession of nuclear weapons by the United Kingdom, in the context of a European contribution to the North Atlantic Alliance, can and should continue to make a positive and necessary contribution to peace and stability.

6. Let me start with the most basic question that is posed: following the end of the Cold War, is a world without nuclear weapons a practical and realistic policy goal in the short to medium term? I have to answer that I do not see that this is so in present circumstances. Of course complete and general nuclear disarmament remains a desirable ultimate goal and we must continue to make what progress we can towards it. But nuclear weapons cannot be dis-invented. The knowledge exists and cannot be expunged, just as we cannot recreate a world without Maxwell's equations or Faradays's law. And reflect on the course of events, should at some distant point in the future a new East/West threat

arise. The memory of nuclear weapons and their technology would still be there. We would be at risk of seeing, in such circumstances, a race to be the first to recreate nuclear weapons, paralleling the original race between the Allies and Germany in 1945, or, in another context, the competitive mobilisations of 1914. Would a Europe in which the prospect of a nuclear rearmament race existed be genuinely more stable? And elsewhere the potential for proliferation would still exist, and therefore the need for the international community to be able to act effectively to counter that risk. For a nuclear free world to become a practicable objective the community of nations would need to develop robust and dependable solutions to these problems. We may all hope for, and work towards, the day when this is possible, but it has not yet arrived. In the meantime we must have realistic policies that promote stability in the international environment as it currently exists.

7. So let me turn first to the strategic background; the international security environment. I avoided just now using the phrase "the new world order". Unhappily, in many respects the most striking characteristic now is disorder. Of course the end of the Cold War has brought many changes that are unambiguously good. Democracy and the rule of law have been revived in countries where such concepts were only a distant memory. The artificial and repressive division of Europe has disappeared. Relations between the great powers are no longer dominated by mutually incompatible ideologies. But the end of the old East/West confrontation, and the end of the repressive internal security apparatus in the Eastern bloc, have also opened the way for some thoroughly unwelcome developments. Nationalism, ethnocentrism and intolerance are throw-backs to a darker age, but they now seem to be growing again, producing new tensions within and between states. The fear of East/West engagement which previously led the superpowers to inhibit conflict between states does so no longer. Even in the West, the relaxation of tension has increased the

possibility of the renationalisation of defence, by which we mean a diminishing of commitment to collective security and a re-emergence of purely national policies..

8. We have also to be realists and recognise that the many positive developments we have seen are not necessarily irreversible. We must continue to do all we can to nurture and strengthen them, but without a blind assumption that everything is always bound to work out for the best. The potential for British interests to be put at serious risk still exists. Demands on British military resources can - and patently do - still arise. In the Defence White Papers this year and last year we have set out our analysis of the situation in terms of the defence roles which form the framework of our policy, the tasks our armed forces are called upon to undertake, and how these relate to force structures. The situation is not static however. We shall continue to work to maintain the essential balance between commitments and capabilities, and to keep up to date our analysis regarding force structures.

9. Looking at the role of nuclear weapons within this analysis, the first question must be how far NATO's possession of a nuclear capability contributes to the security of the United Kingdom and our Allies in the new international circumstances. We have then to ask whether our answer to this is in any way inconsistent with the view we take of the dangers of proliferation. Having reached our conclusion we can turn to consider what contribution the United Kingdom should make in nuclear matters in future.

10. The possession of nuclear weapons has unique implications and entails unique responsibilities. This is not just a matter of their direct destructive potential. The immense power of nuclear weapons removed, long ago, any rational basis for a potential adversary believing that a major war could be fought in Europe and won. The potential for miscalculation and escalation in the heat

of any crisis or conflict reinforced caution. The value of nuclear weapons in such circumstances lies not in classical concepts of war-fighting or war-winning, nor just in deterring the use of nuclear weapons by an adversary, but in actually preventing war. NATO has always seen nuclear weapons in these terms, as part of an integrated approach to war-prevention. The proposition is embodied again in NATO's new Strategic Concept, and I remain utterly convinced of its validity. By the same token I remain deeply sceptical of suggestions that NATO, or the United Kingdom, should make a declaration of no-first-use of nuclear weapons. The clear implication of any such declaration would be that conventional aggression could be undertaken without fear of crossing the nuclear threshold. Put crudely, it implies, if it is believed, that conventional war is a safe option. For all its superficial moral attraction, therefore, a no-first use declaration would take us out of the realm of war prevention and into the realm of war limitation. That is a step that I would regard as retrograde and have no wish to take, and I note with interest Russia's decision not to include such a declaration in its new Military Doctrine.

11. Stable deterrence - or stable war-prevention - between states or groups of states relies crucially on a degree of mutual understanding, and on the evolution or learning of a set of rules of behaviour. This process of evolution or learning unavoidably involves risks and opportunities for misunderstandings. In the Cold War context the rules of behaviour between nuclear states evolved and were learnt over decades. There were times when the process of exploring where the boundaries of permissible behaviour took us uncomfortably close to dangerous territory - for example, the blockade of West Berlin and the Cuban missile crisis. But the lessons of deterrence were well-learnt by the major parties in both East and West, and are now firmly embedded in strategic thinking. Above all, they have demonstrably been the basis for a highly effective system of war-prevention, in spite of the armed antagonism between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

12. What I have described is how nuclear weapons served in the Cold War context to secure stability in Europe. I believe that these deterrence lessons can be translated into the conditions of the post Cold War era, and I propose to look first at the situation in Europe before moving to a wider canvas.

13. There is no question that Russia will remain the pre-eminent military power in Europe. She will retain very substantial military forces, and will continue to be a nuclear superpower. The structures and patterns of deployment of her forces will no doubt change with time, but necessarily the process will be one of evolution from what she has inherited. In these circumstances decisions about our own future force structures and postures should take into careful account what has proved hitherto to be successful in maintaining stability in the presence of Russia's military strength. It is important that those designing Russia's military and nuclear doctrines and forces do not misunderstand the burden of my argument. I am not resigning myself to a state of armed tension between NATO and Russia, quite the reverse. We are forging a new relationship with Russia, and we are hopeful that discussions at the NATO Summit will take this process forward. Russia must be included as part of the solution to Europe's security not excluded from it, as part of the problem. I believe that this transformation will occur more easily if we retain a cohesive North Atlantic Alliance, and a NATO Strategic Concept that retains a US nuclear component, supported by UK and French forces, themselves configured on a minimum stable basis.

14. This leads me naturally to NATO's nuclear capability. The Alliance Strategic Concept embodies NATO's new policy of reduced reliance on nuclear weapons. We have made enormous changes in our nuclear posture over the past couple of years: for example, NATO has reduced its sub-strategic weapons in Europe by over 80%, eliminating in the process all ground-launched systems. This was a direct response to the new military conditions in Europe and the withdrawal of Soviet stationed forces.

15. We shall continue to build on our new relationship with our partners in the North Atlantic Co-operation Council, through bilateral and multilateral efforts in co-operative threat reduction. As the situation develops, and as we strive to consolidate the benefits from the end of the Cold War, it is right that nuclear force plans should continue to come under scrutiny. The START I and START II Treaties, and the various reductions in sub-strategic weapons over the past couple of years, have set in hand major changes to the size and shape of the superpower nuclear arsenals. The British Government attaches great importance to the prompt and full implementation of the START process. At present, of course, this is being complicated by Ukraine, and I made clear our deep concern on this point when I was in Kiev in September.

16. The United States Defence Secretary Les Aspin has recently announced a comprehensive nuclear policy review to consider what further changes the United States has to make in terms of doctrine, force structure and operations. We look forward with interest to exchanging views on these issues with our friends in the United States. The American nuclear guarantee to the Alliance remains of fundamental importance to our collective security, and the closeness of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States on nuclear matters is something we value extremely highly. For our own part, we have been reviewing our plans and I will come back to our conclusions later in my remarks.

17. Within the overall framework of the Alliance I see great benefit from closer co-operation and cohesion in nuclear matters between the United Kingdom and France. A year ago this month we set up the Franco-British* Joint Commission on Nuclear Policy and Doctrine, which brings together senior officials from the British and French Foreign and Defence Ministries. The Commission has carried out a comparison of the two countries' approaches to the

role of deterrence, nuclear doctrines and concepts, anti-missile defences, arms control and non-proliferation. At the Franco-British Summit on 26 July, the Joint Commission was made a permanent standing body with a substantial amount of work for the future.

18. The most striking, and welcome, aspect of this joint work has been the confirmation that there are no differences between France and the United Kingdom on the fundamental nuclear issues. We are firmly committed to developing this dialogue and co-operation. In doing so, we are not attempting to create an alternative to the existing transatlantic relationship. By demonstrating an identity of interest and of purpose between NATO's European nuclear powers we aim to strengthen the specific European contribution to the deterrence which underpins the collective security of the whole Alliance. Of course, we have different perceptions of some issues; we have different histories, and we have traditionally had different relationships with the United States. But it is very difficult today to identify any area where we are likely to have a fundamental difference of national security interest as members of the European Union, and it is equally difficult to conceive within the Atlantic Alliance of a substantial threat to one country which would not also be a threat to the other.

19. I said earlier that I would move on to look at nuclear weapons against a wider world canvas, and here the picture is very different. Here stability does not rest on secure deterrence relationships, and it is both right and entirely consistent to be deeply concerned about the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons. I do not say this because the existing nuclear weapon states are more virtuous or responsible than anyone else, although we are careful stewards of nuclear knowledge and capability. I say it because the process of achieving a new stable relationship of

nuclear deterrence is a process of evolution which unavoidably involves risks, where the consequences of failure could be catastrophic. The acquisition of nuclear weapons might lead a country to believe that it could achieve a regional hegemony that was not possible with conventional weapons alone. The prospect of a neighbour or near-neighbour acquiring such weapons might lead other countries to consider some form of pre-emption, and so on.

20. The recent example of Iraq gives a warning of how nuclear weapons could add a new and particularly dangerous destabilising factor to already unstable regions. That is why the United Kingdom has consistently sought to extend and strengthen international non-proliferation measures, as a means of enhancing global stability. It is in everyone's interest that the risks involved in introducing nuclear weapons as a new factor into regional balances is avoided, and that the motivation for setting off down the path of proliferation is as far as possible removed.

21. I therefore see no contradiction between the policy for nuclear weapons I have described and vigorous measures to prevent nuclear proliferation. Ideally proliferation is best dealt with by removing the motivation to proliferate, and the UK is closely involved in a range of activities to alleviate the tensions that might lead to proliferation. Realistically, however, we have also to look to the supply side of the equation, and here the best means to prevent proliferation is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, backed up by strict export controls and other political measures. But it would be unwise to ignore completely the potential consequences if, despite our efforts, there is proliferation of nuclear weapons. To what extent might the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons also have a role in deterring proliferators? Since the motivation for a country wanting to acquire nuclear weapons is likely to be regional, the possession of nuclear weapons by the

United Kingdom is unlikely itself to affect its decision to pursue this course. However, while the motivation may be regional the possibility exists of a proliferator engaging in a conflict in which our interests, or even British forces, are involved.

22. It is important not to jump to premature conclusions at this point. Our analysis of deterrence, and the contribution of nuclear weapons to it, now has to relate to a new context. The basic ideas do not change. Deterrence is about sustaining in the mind of the potential aggressor a belief that our use of the weapons could not prudently be altogether discounted; and this in turn requires that the hypothetical use should be credibly proportionate to the importance to us of the interests which aggression would damage. Those conditions may not be so obviously met in future as they seemed to be in the central setting of the Cold War.

23. When faced with the military might of the old Soviet Union, virtually any aggression from that quarter, if successfully persisted in, would have had to be treated as a mortal threat to the vital interests of the West. But outside the old East/West context this is far less likely to be the case. There will be more room for uncertainty over the nature and scale of aggression that would justify the threat of a nuclear response. Would, for example, the possible use of chemical or biological weapons against us be seen as justifying the threat of our using nuclear weapons? Would there be a difference between the use of such weapons against centres of population in the United Kingdom and their use against British forces deployed overseas?



24. We have of course given, in common with the other nuclear weapons states, a negative security assurance which precludes our using, or threatening to use, nuclear weapons against any state which is a party to the NPT or similar internationally binding non-proliferation commitments and which is not itself a nuclear weapons state or in alliance with one. These assurances were given

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in the context of the Cold War, when there was no appreciable risk of our facing a chemical or biological attack from any country outside the Warsaw Pact. They remain in force today and we are prepared, as we have told Ukraine, to reiterate them in the same form in respect of any new adherent to the NPT. But the context in which we extend these assurances is one in which we attach ever increasing importance to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions: both to securing universal adherence to these Conventions and to ensuring that they are effectively implemented, with appropriate international action directed against countries which do not abide by their provisions.

25. From our side of the equation I have to say that it is difficult to be confident that an intended deterrent would work in the way intended, in the absence of an established nuclear deterrent relationship. Would the threat be understood in the deterrent way in which it was intended; and might it have some unpredictable and perhaps counter-productive consequence? Categorical answers to these questions might be hard to come by, and in their absence the utility of the deterrent threat as a basis for policy and action would necessarily be in doubt. Taking another angle there is sometimes speculation that more so-called "usable" nuclear weapons - very low-yield devices which could be used to carry out what are euphemistically called "surgical" strikes - would allow nuclear deterrence to be effective in circumstances where existing weapons would be self-detering. I am thoroughly opposed to this view. The implications of such a development of a new war-fighting role for nuclear weapons would be seriously damaging to our approach to maintaining stability in the European context, quite apart from the impact it would have on our efforts to encourage non-proliferation and greater confidence outside Europe. This is not a route that I would wish any nuclear power to go down.



26. In contrast therefore to the situation in Europe, it is difficult to see deterrence operating securely against proliferators. Of course a particular situation might arise in which deterrence had a part to play in our overall approach, but this would be a function of the specific circumstances of the case. We must be aware of, and continue to think about, the possibility without regarding deterrence as a panacea.

27. I turn now to how we will implement our policy, as part of NATO, in terms of our future nuclear force plans, and our actions to counter proliferation.

28. For the United Kingdom, the continuing role of our independent nuclear forces in underpinning our defence strategy and contributing to collective Alliance security was reaffirmed in "Defending Our Future". We envisage nuclear weapons having a reduced salience, but it remains vital in the new circumstances that there should be a strong European contribution to this aspect of Alliance security as to all the others. The developments in Franco-British cooperation which I have already described are part of this and offer a very important prospect for further strengthening the collective security of the whole Alliance. Within this context it is essential that Britain should continue to maintain both minimum strategic and sub-strategic capabilities. In a moment I will talk about the equipment aspects of this, but before doing so I want to pay tribute to the many people in all three Services and in the supporting arms, who have made and continue to make a vital contribution to this country's nuclear posture.

29. The first Trident submarine, HMS Vanguard, remains on course for entering into operational service on schedule around the end of 1994 or the beginning of 1995. A fleet of four Trident submarines remains necessary to provide an adequate minimum

deterrent. But we have long made clear that we do not intend to use the full capability of the Trident missile system, and that each submarine would not carry more than 128 warheads. In fact, I can now confirm that, on the basis of our current assessment of our minimum deterrent needs, each submarine will deploy with no more than 96 warheads, and may carry significantly fewer. Let me emphasise here that I am talking exclusively about warheads, not about missiles. I am not prepared, and do not believe that it would be in the interests of the country for me to go further and say exactly how many warheads within the figure of 96 will actually be carried. I am however prepared to say that on current plans the total explosive power carried on each Trident submarine will not be much changed from Polaris. I can say that when Trident is fully in service the explosive power of the United Kingdom's operational nuclear inventory, comprising both strategic and sub-strategic systems, will be more than 25% down on the 1990 figure.

30. What I have said about the capability we shall deploy should lay to rest comments and speculation about Trident representing a major growth in the size of the United Kingdom's nuclear armoury. Trident will have only the minimum capability necessary for our security needs, and will be operated in the most economical and efficient way. In this respect, a fleet of four submarines will not only provide assurance that one boat can always be at sea, but will also enable us to maintain cost-effective operating patterns.

31. Trident was conceived as a replacement for our strategic nuclear capability. But the ability to undertake a massive strike with strategic systems is not enough to ensure deterrence. An aggressor might, in certain circumstances, gamble on a lack of will ultimately to resort to such dire action. It is therefore important for the credibility of our deterrent that the United Kingdom also possesses the capability to undertake a more limited nuclear strike in order to induce a political decision to halt aggression by delivering an unmistakable message of our willingness to defend our vital interests to the utmost.

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32. The United Kingdom has already played a leading role in the reductions in the overall NATO sub-strategic stockpile which I mentioned earlier. We have eliminated our Lance missile, nuclear artillery, and maritime tactical nuclear roles, and we have substantially reduced the numbers of our air-delivered weapons. These are major changes in our nuclear posture, and are our response to the very different international security situation which now exists. The consequence of all these changes is that the United Kingdom's sub-strategic capability now consists of only the reduced number of WE177 free-fall bombs deployed on Tornado and, until next year, Buccaneer aircraft.

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33. During the 1980s the continuing increase in capability of the Warsaw Pact air defences led us to consider the early replacement of the WE177 with a sophisticated stand-off system with a better ability to penetrate those defences. Now, however, the security situation has changed dramatically, and we have therefore reviewed our sub-strategic force requirements, bearing in mind also that we are on the verge of introducing into service the highly capable Trident system.

34. The conclusion we reached, which I announced in the House of Commons during the Defence Debate on 18 October, is that replacing the WE177 is not a sufficiently high priority in current circumstances to justify proceeding with a new system. For the longer term, when WE177 leaves service, we will exploit the flexibility and capability of Trident to provide the vehicle for both sub-strategic and strategic aspects of deterrence. But we must also recognise that judgements of this nature about future circumstances must inevitably be provisional. We will keep all our requirements in this area under review in the light of international developments.

35. Our insurance against potential adverse trends in the international situation lies in the proven expertise of the Atomic

Weapons Establishment. The decision not to proceed with a successor to the WE177 will change the focus of some work at AWE, but there will still need to be a challenging programme of research in order to sustain our ability to underwrite the safety and reliability of the warheads we have in service, and to maintain the capability to develop and produce warheads in future as circumstances make this necessary. We will also be looking at what scope there is for AWE's expertise to be applied in fields other than nuclear weapons. Of course we expect all this work to be undertaken with the greatest possible efficiency and economy consistent with maintaining safety and security, and I know that the managing contractor, Hunting-BRAE, is fully committed to this. AWE and its predecessor organisation have been fundamentally important to the United Kingdom's nuclear role for more than four decades. I pay tribute to that, and I look forward to the continuing excellent work that I know they will be doing in the future.

36. I turn now to the steps we are taking to prevent nuclear proliferation. The United Kingdom has a long record of supporting good, practical measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But the recent changes in world circumstances, including the break-up of the old Soviet empire, may give additional impetus or opportunities to would-be proliferators, and we need to consider very carefully whether there is more that we might be able to do to counter them.

37. I have already mentioned that I am very conscious of the dangers of non-nuclear forms of proliferation, involving biological, chemical and advanced conventional weapons. These too can have terrible effects, and may be a destabilising factor in tense regions of the world. They may also begin to loom larger the more we succeed in countering nuclear proliferation. We have been, and continue to be, fully committed to a range of international measures designed to deal with these risks. My focus today, however, is on nuclear matters.

38. Central to international non-proliferation policies is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In 1995 the parties to the Treaty must decide for how long to extend it. The best way for the international community to show its determination to prevent proliferation will be to agree to extend the NPT indefinitely, and that is the aim of the British Government. We also hope to use this opportunity to achieve universal membership of the Treaty - there are only a few countries which hold back, although some of them are countries of particular importance. And we aim to strengthen the safeguards regime associated with the Treaty.

39. The scale and extent of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons programme showed the need for truly effective safeguards. The international community has responded in Iraq's case by eliminating its capability to produce weapons of mass destruction and by placing its remaining activities under long-term monitoring, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 687. North Korea presents a further challenge. Although its last-minute announcement that it would suspend its withdrawal from the NPT was a welcome step in the right direction, it has not yet resumed its position as a member in good standing of that regime.

40. Associated with the NPT are the various Security Assurances given by the nuclear weapon states to the non-nuclear weapon states. These are all about confidence: endeavouring to remove the fear that nuclear weapons might be used to coerce a nonnuclear state, and thereby removing a motivation to proliferate. We will be considering whether there is more that we can do in this direction, recognising the importance of reassuring the great majority of nations who maintain a responsible commitment to forgo proliferation, while ensuring that those who pursue irresponsible policies can have no confidence that acquiring nuclear weapons would enhance their security.

41. A comprehensive test ban is often spoken of as a vital missing piece in the anti-proliferation jigsaw. Certainly we are conscious of the message that a test ban would send to the world, but we need to be realistic. A comprehensive test ban will not by itself prevent a determined proliferator from producing relatively crude nuclear weapons. However, if it involved effective measures for verification and inspection it would constrain the development of more sophisticated weapons. The United Kingdom is therefore ready to participate fully and constructively in negotiations to secure a comprehensive test ban.

42. This has not been an entirely easy decision for us. Nuclear testing has in the past played a central role in maintaining the highest level of nuclear safety assurance, and we will have to work hard to ensure that those levels of assurance can still be maintained without testing.

* 43. A further measure that might constrain the "means" of proliferation might be a verified cut-off in the production of fissile material for explosive purposes. President Clinton highlighted this possibility in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in September. We will need to consider the implications of such a cut-off carefully, but we are hopeful of being able to work towards a multilateral regime that will have real non-proliferation benefits.

44. This is not the full list of possible measures. We are closely engaged in measures to control the export of key nuclear related technologies, and we are prepared to play our part in defusing regional tensions which might fuel proliferation, and in imposing political and economic sanctions if these become necessary.

45. The American Administration has made countering proliferation a major policy priority. We warmly welcome this, and we are looking forward to discussions with our NATO Allies on this important subject over the coming months.

46. I started my talk with an apparent paradox: on the one hand, nuclear weapons play a fundamental role in the Alliance's system of war-prevention; but, on the other hand, the proliferation of nuclear weapons presents one of the most serious threats to international stability. The resolution of this apparent paradox lies in being aware that the stable system of war-prevention established within Europe and based to an important extent on nuclear weapons was not achieved painlessly or without danger. And that it arose from the very special circumstances of a heavily-armed continent divided by fundamentally hostile ideologies. It involved a protracted, and unavoidably difficult and dangerous, learning process for which the historical circumstances do not exist elsewhere.

47. Having achieved a stable and secure system of war-prevention in the Cold war context, we should be in no hurry to throw away the benefits. NATO strategy, and the United Kingdom nuclear contribution within it, is designed to preserve stability at a minimum level of deterrence. This commitment to the minimum is clearly demonstrated by the systems we have eliminated as well as by the adjustments we are making to the systems we are retaining.

48. Our desire to preserve stability in Europe is matched by our equal determination to foster stability elsewhere, which means preventing the introduction of nuclear weapons as a new, and powerfully destabilising factor in regional relationships. The aim must be to secure an international environment in which states are not motivated even to consider proliferation, and in which every possible measure is taken to ensure that the means of proliferation are not made available. The United Kingdom is at the forefront of these efforts.