



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

Response to UN Conference to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons – March 2017

Thank you for contacting me about nuclear weapons and the UN conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

To be clear, Britain is widely recognised as the most pro-active of the nuclear weapon states on nuclear disarmament. We have reduced our nuclear forces by over half from the Cold War peak in the late 1970s and recently reduced the number of deployed warheads on each submarine from 48 to 40, as well committing to reduce our overall stockpile to no more than 180 warheads by the mid-2020s. The UK possesses around 1 per cent of the total global stockpile of approximately 17,000 nuclear weapons.

In addition, the UK plays a leading role on disarmament verification with the US and Norway and continues to press for key steps towards multilateral disarmament, including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and successful negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

However, given the unpredictable international security environment, and the risk that nuclear weapons may proliferate further in the future, I believe it is right that the Government remains committed to maintaining a minimum credible deterrent. For this reason, the UK does not support the UN conference at the end of March which seeks to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

It is the Government's view that productive results can only be ensured through a consensus-based approach that takes into account the wider global security environment. However, I can assure you that, as a responsible Nuclear Weapons State, the UK is committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP