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Dear William,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Board of the United Nations Association of the UK (UNA-UK) following the recent relatively successful outcome of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York. I should like in the first instance to pay tribute to the effective support and leadership given to achieving this outcome by both the outgoing and the incoming governments and by their officials.

UNA-UK attaches the greatest importance to ensuring that this positive shift in the direction of travel on multilateral nuclear disarmament and in the strengthening of non-proliferation disciplines is validated by our energetic and sustained follow-up to the action plans which were endorsed in New York. We are only too conscious of the fact that it was the absence of any such follow-up to the commitments entered into at the NPT Review Conference in 2000 which undermined confidence in and support for the non-proliferation regime and led to the divisions in the international community which were still in evidence during last month's intensive negotiations. So we very much hope that the Government will give a high political priority to the follow-up to the conference and will play a leading role in work to implement those action plans.

In that context we welcome the announcement you yourself made during the Debate on the Address that the Government intended to carry out a nuclear weapons policy posture review. We hope that that review will lead to a substantial clarification of our policies in this regard following the example set by the Obama administration's nuclear posture review. We would like to see the government stating that the sole purpose of our having nuclear weapons is to deter others who possess them. We urge the government to subject to critical scrutiny aspects of our current posture such as the "continuous at sea" capability, which seem to us to be relics of the Cold War which can no longer be justified. In general we would hope that this review would provide an opportunity for Britain to make its contribution to the international objective of diminishing the alert status of nuclear weapons and of reducing their salience in the military doctrines of all the countries which possess them.

We also understand that the review of NATO's strategic concept, which is currently under way and which is likely to culminate in the NATO summit in Lisbon in November, will

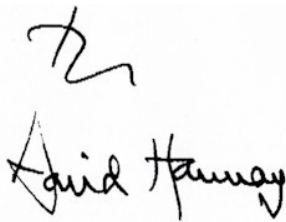
necessarily touch on the Alliance's nuclear posture. We hope that this opportunity too will be taken to clarify that posture; and that the Government will support the idea of engaging Russia in a negotiation whose object would be to achieve multilateral agreement to remove all short range nuclear weapons from Europe.

We are deeply concerned by the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva over the start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) which has already imposed substantial delays. If that deadlock cannot be broken by the time of the UN Secretary-General's proposed high level meeting in September, we would hope that the Government would consider other ways of proceeding, for example a de facto agreed moratorium on production of fissile material, similar to the de facto moratorium on nuclear tests, or the drafting of a FMCT by the recognised nuclear weapons or action by the UN General Assembly to facilitate the beginning of negotiations on a FMCT. Some early public discussion of these alternative ways of proceeding might surely also contribute to breaking the log-jam in Geneva.

On civil nuclear energy we hope that the government will continue the work begun some years ago at the International Atomic Energy Agency to define and endorse schemes for multi-national or internationally guaranteed sources of enriched uranium and reprocessing services so that the predicted increase in civil nuclear energy supply can take place in conditions which pose the least possible proliferation risks.

Finally we very much hope that the government will continue to work on the verification of arms control and elimination measures which has been undertaken in collaboration with the Norwegian government (VERTIC) and will consider some way of broadening our research work in this field to include the other recognised nuclear weapons states.

Driving forward work on those issues, together with early steps to begin preparing for the agreed conference on a Nuclear Weapons-free Zone in the Middle East in 2012, will, we believe, be the best way of ensuring that the progress made last month in New York does not run into the sands of delay and obfuscation as has so often happened in the past.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hannay". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick
Chair, UNA-UK