



***ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON  
GLOBAL NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND ARMS CONTROL***

**PATRONS: FABIAN HAMILTON MP, RICHARD FOORD MP, RT HON SIR JULIAN LEWIS MP,  
BARONESS SUSAN MILLER, BARONESS CHRISTINE BLOWER, BARONESS NATALIE BENNETT**

***The 2026 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference:  
What should we expect and what should the UK's priorities be?***

**Held Tuesday, 24 March 2026 in Committee Room 6, House of Commons**

**NON-VERBATIM RECORD OF MEETING**

**CHAIR'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Fabian Hamilton MP welcomed all MPs, Peers, speakers and those from outside of Parliament to this inaugural meeting of the All Party Forum on Global Nuclear Non-Proliferation. He remarked that given everything that is going on in the world right now this meeting could not be more timely or more important.

He explained that although we would prefer more parliamentarians to be in attendance, this is just our first meeting. Through working with the Secretariat the Parliamentary Patrons will build support for the Forum, which hopefully will meet quarterly.

Fabian thanked Dr Tim Street and Steve Barwick for the commendably short briefing paper which sets out the three key questions we are seeking to answer this evening:

- I. What should the UK's priorities be going into the 2026 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference (RevCon) which takes place between 27 April-22 May?
- II. How does the expiry of New START—and the wars in Ukraine and Iran—impact upon global non-proliferation efforts?
- III. What could the UK do to respond to rising challenges to non-proliferation, support the aims of the NPT, reinforce the nuclear taboo, and make progress towards a global No First Use agreement?

He added that the central issue or conundrum we face is: in a context of an increasingly militaristic, insecure and volatile world order, how can we raise the issue of the need to get back on a path to global nuclear disarmament?

Finally, he introduced Dr Alice Spilman—a Policy Fellow at BASIC, the British American Security Information Council, which was established in 1987. She works across BASIC's Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Programme and the Responsibilities and Global Governance Programme. She is also a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Leicester. Her research interests include conceptions of nuclear responsibility and the NPT.

**GUEST SPEAKER: DR ALICE SPILMAN, POLICY FELLOW, [BASIC](#)**

Alice began her remarks by stating that the Government will likely have three priorities at the NPT RevCon: collective reaffirmation of the treaty; to demonstrate UK leadership; and to protect the position of the UK as a nuclear weapon state (NWS) with a credible minimum deterrent.

She pointed out that, following the expiry of New START, this is the first time a RevCon will take place in the context of there being **no** global nuclear arms control treaties in place. Given global conflicts, the conference is unlikely to issue any consensus final document at its conclusion. Nor did it do so following the last two RevCons (in 2022 and 2015).

Alice said that the UK Government is unlikely to talk in terms of the NPT being in crisis. To do so might encourage a sense that it is close to collapse. Given the treaty's value for non-proliferation efforts, the UK thus wants to protect it.

In terms of what success might look like for this RevCon, given the current state of the world, this could be limited to: a commitment to enhanced transparency and accountability (e.g. the nuclear weapon states enhancing their national reporting and engaging in interactive dialogue on those reports); the promotion of nuclear risk reduction; and support for the principles of the NPT.

In terms of the UK's other aims, it wants Iran to remain in the treaty, permit IAEA inspectors to re-enter facilities, and return to complying with safeguard agreements. The UK's recent decision to join NATO's nuclear sharing mission means the Government will face criticism on this front.

Moreover, those who see the NPT as a key venue for pursuing nuclear disarmament are also bound to express their wider frustration at the lack of any progress in this area. She went on to say that President Trump's statement that the US may consider resumption of nuclear testing, and the accusations that China tested in 2020, means that the issue will feature at the RevCon. It is hoped that a nuclear test ban will be re-affirmed, but this is likely to be done by the UK in a way that avoids confrontation with the Trump administration.

Alice concluded her remarks by highlighting nuclear risk reduction, which is a widely held concern. Areas the UK could support here include addressing AI and emerging technologies— particularly to maintain human control over nuclear operations. In addition, it would be useful to identify how the UK can promote bilateral and regional risk reduction dialogues. As the current chair of the P5 process, the UK also has an opportunity to explain how the nuclear powers will show their commitment to the NPT.

**QUESTIONS FROM PARLIAMENTARIANS**

**Q:** How will the UK's acquisition of nuclear-capable F35As mix with discussions at the conference on transparency and accountability?

*A: This decision will be criticised and scrutinised at the RevCon. The UK will say it makes no strategic difference, but will make the claim that in explaining the rationale for the acquisition that the UK is being as transparent as possible given national security considerations.*

**Q:** Would the planned transfer of sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago (including Diego Garcia) to Mauritius jeopardise the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone which was agreed in 2009, including by Mauritius, therefore invalidating the Treaty of Pelindaba?

*A: This is an interesting question which I will look into further e.g. on the potential presence of US nuclear weapons on Diego Garcia*

Q: How will the AUKUS Treaty be viewed at the RevCon?

*A: It will no doubt be raised (including by China) by those who view it as setting a dangerous precedent (because highly enriched uranium will be transferred to Australia) . The US and UK will stick to the line that the treaty involves nuclear propulsion technology and therefore does not contravene the NPT. A conversation is needed on this i.e. on the arrangement of safeguards involving the IAEA and Australia.*

Q: Will China be called out for its non-compliance with the NPT given its large increase in nuclear weapons?

*A: Again this will be raised, but the fact that China have committed to a policy of No First Use will be used as a counterargument.*

Fabian then introduced Dr Hassan Elbahtimy who is Senior Lecturer in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He is also a Trustee of the [British International Studies Association](#). Since 2015, he has co-edited the [Non-Proliferation Treaty \(NPT\) Briefing Book](#) that serves as a reference guide to diplomats, civil society and academics working on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

**GUEST SPEAKER: DR HASSAN ELBAHTIMY, SENIOR LECTURER, [KING'S COLLEGE LONDON](#)**

Hassan opened his remarks by saying this RevCon will be one of the most challenging as the stakes are high, there is a danger that it could be the third RevCon which fails to agree an outcome document—an unprecedented situation. There is thus a real danger of support for the NPT fracturing.

Changes at the top and bottom of the international system have led to growing consensus that the world, and arms control processes initiated from the 1960s on, are at a major inflection point. The NPT was built, partly through an understanding between the US and the Soviet Union, and partly as a global instrument with a stake for many non-nuclear weapons states.

At the top of the international system, the bilateral arms control process has come to a standstill with the acrimonious expiry of New START treaty in February 2026 and more significantly lack of common purpose between US, Russia and China about arms control and the broader nuclear order. The rise of China as a more proactive and assertive international player is also re-shaping the politics of the treaty including on AUKUS.

At the bottom of the international order, the many non-nuclear weapons states that are integral to the order are increasingly frustrated by worsening prospect of meaningful nuclear reductions by the nuclear weapon states and worsening prospect for nuclear disarmament under the NPT. To a large extent the creation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (which now has 70 states parties) shows the frustration of many countries with the lack of progress through the NPT.

**QUESTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALL ATTENDEES**

Q: What impact do you think China will have at the RevCon?

*A: Recently, China has developed a more prominent presence in the Review Conferences, and this is likely to continue and expand. China often aligns with developing countries and has consistently advocated a No First Use Treaty among nuclear powers. They will also push back on the idea that they are expanding their arsenal too much. They are likely to raise objections on AUKUS, and nuclear sharing while strongly supporting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy globally.*

Q: How do hypersonic missiles affect the NPT?

*A: Hypersonic missiles are not faster than Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, but they are far less easy to detect and more manoeuvrable, and so harder to intercept. By reducing time to respond, hypersonics are potentially 'first strike' weapons (thereby increasing global insecurity by introducing 'use them or lose them' dynamics).*

Q: Given the devastating effects of the use of even a few nuclear weapons, how can it make sense for any nation to have more than a few hundred?

*A: Yes it is true that nuclear weapons use could lead to global consequences including a nuclear winter. Certain Nuclear Weapons States are however pushing to have more and different types of nuclear weapons in order to use them in different ways for different contingencies. Technological change is currently an important driver in rethinking deterrence dynamics.*

Q: How likely is it that the RevCon will lead to a recommitment to the nuclear taboo?

*A: The taboo is on the back foot. There was a reaffirmation by NWS in 2022 that nuclear war can't be won and must not be fought. But the current disharmony between the great powers means that another such statement is not very likely at the RevCon. At the same time, more states are accepting the importance of nuclear risk reduction. This has previously not been accepted e.g. as a replacement for disarmament, but this is changing.*

Q: Given the UK does not have good relations with Russia (due to the Ukraine war), and limited influence with China and the USA (due to its war with Iran), what opportunity does the Government have to work with other states at the RevCon?

*A: The UK is working very closely with France and its NATO allies. The UK is trying to influence the 'middle ground' e.g. on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and funnelling support to states from philanthropic funders.*

Q: Is Iran not pulling out of the NPT a glimmer of hope?

*A: Yes - the fact Iran has not withdrawn from the treaty is positive. That said Iran has its hands full at the moment and is not worrying about the NPT. Iran will play an important role at the RevCon and will be on the front foot, with a prominent voice. We need to be prepared that, on the long term, current military strikes might mean Iran is more determined to pursue a nuclear path in the future.*

Q: In the recent Strategic Defence Review the Government promised a national debate about defence. What has happened to that?

*A: That is right. And it has not begun. 99% of the public cannot even name the nine nuclear weapons states. There has been something akin to nuclear amnesia since the end of the Cold War, although the Ukraine war has been a rude awakening. We need to collectively educate ourselves, raise our 'nuclear IQ,' and responsibly engage with the public.*

Q. What are your comments on the weaponisation of civil nuclear facilities in Ukraine?

*A: This issue was very divisive at the last RevCon and will continue to be prominent in the coming Review Conference. Ukraine, supported by many states, objected to attacks and then occupation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station. The IAEA has made efforts to address this situation. We also need to consider Ukraine's decision to relinquish Soviet nuclear weapons in the 1990s and the failure of security guarantees Kiev obtained in return.*

Q. What is the future for discussions on a Middle East WMD Free Zone e.g. in relation to Israel's nuclear arsenal?

A: Efforts in this direction failed at the 2015 RevCon. It continues to be a big issue.

## NEXT STEPS

Fabian Hamilton MP thanked the speakers and all attendees and explained that the plan is to meet again in June. The next meeting of the forum will review outputs of the NPT Review Conference and the state of global nuclear proliferation, with Lord Vernon Coaker or Lord George Robertson invited to speak and an academic.

## ATTENDEES

Name	Affiliation
Fabian Hamilton MP	Labour Party
Richard Foord MP	Liberal Democrat Party
Rt Hon Sir Julian Lewis MP	Conservative Party
Baroness Susan Miller	Liberal Democrat Party
Dr Ellie Chowns	Green Party
Baroness Christine Blower	Labour Party
Baroness Natalie Bennett	Green Party
Lord John Alderdice	Liberal Democrat Party
Baroness Jenny Jones	Green Party
Steve Barwick	Forum Secretariat and Chair, Nuclear Education Trust
Dr Tim Street	Forum Secretariat and Secretary, British Pugwash
Okopi Ajonye	Co-Director, Nuclear Information Service
Dr Peter Burt	Vice-Chair, Nuclear Education Trust
Daniel Blaney	Trustee, Nuclear Education Trust
Matteo Bordin	Board member, Student / Young Pugwash
Dr Poul Erik Christiansen	Program Director, International Pugwash
Olivia Ibbotson	Board member, Student / Young Pugwash
Jane Kinninmont	CEO, United Nations Association-UK
Sophie Radice	Head of Campaigns, United Nations Association-UK
Larry MacFaul	Executive Director, Vertic
Ching Wei Sooi	Board member, Student / Young Pugwash
Dr Richard Guthrie	Chair, Joseph Rotblat Memorial Trust
Dr Phillip Webber	Co-Chair, Scientists for Global Responsibility
Henrietta Wilson	PhD Candidate, King's College London
Manuel Galileo	Analyst, SOAS- University of London
Jack Crawford	Research Fellow, Royal United Services Institute
Soh Yu Wei	Board member, Student / Young Pugwash
Georgia Cole	Research Associate, Chatham House
Nikita Gryazin	Policy Fellow, European Leadership Network
Nicholas Mellor	Independent Researcher

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