



Ministry
of Defence

SECRETARY OF STATE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
FLOOR 5, ZONE D, MAIN BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 020 7218 9000
Fax: 020 721 87140
E-mail: defencesecretary-group@mod.uk

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21st August 2017

Den Caroline

Thank you for your letter dated 13 July, regarding the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the United Kingdom's commitment and approach to nuclear disarmament.

I appreciate that you have strong views on this issue, and I can assure you that the decision not to take part in this treaty does not affect our long term commitment to a world without nuclear weapons. We need to achieve multilateral disarmament, negotiated using a step-by-step, consensus-based approach that takes into account the wider global security context. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) already provides the framework to deliver that. Indeed, it is our assessment that the nuclear ban treaty risks undermining and weakening the NPT, which as I am sure you will agree, has played an unparalleled role in curtailing the nuclear arms race. The UK has therefore not taken part in negotiation of this treaty, and does not intend to sign, ratify or become party to it.

I understand that you have already discussed this issue with the Political Counsellor at the UK's Permanent Mission to New York when you visited earlier in the year. Our approach is led by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and therefore should you wish to discuss the treaty further I suggest you approach FCO officials in the first instance (your office should contact the FCO Parliamentary Team (PRTActioninfo@fco.gsi.gov.uk, 0207 008 4005)).

I am copying this letter to Sir Alan Duncan.

*7 Aug 2017,
Michael*

THE RT HON SIR MICHAEL FALLON KCB MP

Caroline Lucas MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA