

# UK Ban Treaty Phobia

(This is a 'mind-map'. Start in the middle.)

The **UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, supported by an overwhelming number of nations, is open for signature. There is a clear mechanism for nuclear-armed states to sign up. It does not require them to disarm immediately but to enter into negotiations on a time scale for the destruction of their stockpiles. Still our Government persists in ignoring a historic opportunity. This 'mindmap' seeks to explain why, so that we can bring about a change of heart on this issue.

This is a misunderstanding of technology. Nuclear weapons depend on a vast amount of engineering. To monitor and verify elimination is easier than for any other type of weapon. We employ thousands of professional people just to *maintain* the technology; we can decide not to do it. Most countries have already done so. A treaty to ban nuclear weapons is a very practical possibility.

The vote depended on the premise that multilateral disarmament was not achievable in the foreseeable future. That this prevented us from supporting steps towards it was not a rational position to take. The global ban treaty is a new route to disarmament. To oppose its implementation just because we opposed its formulation is equally irrational. Parliament is a forum in which this most dangerous form of national pride could be extinguished.

Not only is this a morally bankrupt position but it is invalid from any point of view now the weapons are banned by international law. We could become a pariah state, with decidedly negative status on account of it.

Many people believe that we must live with nuclear weapons forever because they cannot be "uninvented".

Last year Parliament voted to go ahead to develop a new generation of the Trident weapons system.

There is no doubting the influence of the desire for political power and status. Tony Blair admitted that this was the deciding factor behind his backing for Trident renewal in 2006/7.

The parliamentary vote

Power and Status



"It can't be done"

Reasons for ban treaty phobia



Multilateral hypocrisy?

Fear of chaos

Critics said that the treaty would jeopardise the security and stability achieved through the NPT.

All parties called for multilateral disarmament, but given the opportunity to join negotiations for a ban treaty the nuclear weapons states failed to participate. Why?



In negotiation towards the ban treaty, everyone could have a say. All nations had rightfully equal status as being almost equally threatened by the consequences of a nuclear conflict. A multilateral disarmament agreement between nuclear nations, would have excluded the rest and would not limit the freedom of the nuclear nations to re-arm at some future date. The ban treaty has made nuclear weapons illegal under international law, for those that sign it. The treaty is aligning international law with humanitarian principles and moral law. The non-nuclear countries have taken the moral high ground in the name of humanity. It is shameful that Britain is not there with them.



The Ban Treaty references and builds on the NPT, yet it is challenging the freedom contrived by the nuclear weapons states, as a supposedly temporary measure, under Article VI. The increased pressure to implement Article VI is applicable to all the nuclear-armed nations. How will they react? Is this more dangerous than the continual degradation of the moral power of the NPT (after 47 years of failure on Article VI) and the indefinitely prolonged holding of nuclear weapons by increasingly unpredictable, possibly unstable, national leaders? The UN vote indicates that the overwhelming number of governments have judged otherwise.