

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

27th November 2020

New Content,

RE: TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (EDM 1072)

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, specifically in respect of Early Day Motion (EDM) 1072; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I understand that nuclear weapons are a highly emotive topic which attract a significant amount of attention. While I am aware the Government does not intend to sign, ratify, or become party to the treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, I do want to reassure you that the UK is committed to the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT).

Notwithstanding the fact that as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs, in any event, I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system, and I think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with Ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs.

I firmly believe that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament, negotiated using a step-by-step approach, provided for under the NPT. The *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* would threaten this ambition by comprehensively prohibiting participation in development, testing, production, acquisition, possession and storage of nuclear weapons. Given the unpredictable security environment we face, such a move would undoubtedly threaten our national security, and the collective security of our NATO allies.

The NPT, on the other hand, puts in place the structures to further the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Over the last 50 years, it has minimised the proliferation of nuclear weapons, provided the framework to enable significant levels of nuclear disarmament and allowed states to develop secure and safe, and importantly peaceful, uses of nuclear energy. It has also played a crucial role in providing the basis for discussions with Iran and DPRK.

While I understand this is not the answer you were hoping to receive, I do want to stress that the Government has made significant progress in nuclear disarmament. The UK is the only country to have reduced its deterrent capability to a single nuclear weapon system and has reduced the requirement for its operationally available warheads.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you, then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

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