The Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan KCMG MP, Minister of State for Europe and the Americas at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office – Written evidence (NPT0050)

At my oral evidence session on 6 March to the House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations, I committed to write to clarify some details relating to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

We have been very clear with international partners and Parliament that we would support new arms control measures that improve security and stability. However, for arms control to be effective, each party must respect its Treaty obligations and have the confidence that other parties will also respect the agreement. Russia has developed and deployed a treaty-violating missile system and, despite the diplomatic efforts of the US and NATO Allies, has shown no signs of wanting to save the INF Treaty by returning to full and verifiable compliance.

Any amendments to the existing Treaty would be a matter for the parties to the Treaty. The idea of ‘multilateralising’ the Treaty to include other countries with ground-launched intermediate-range missiles, such as China, would require them to be persuaded of the benefits of eliminating their missiles. In our engagements with international partners, there has been no indication of any other country having an appetite to consider joining the INF Treaty.

Moreover, for any country to contemplate joining an amended or new treaty, Russia would first need to address its violations of the existing treaty. Other parties would need to have confidence in Russia’s intentions.

Russia has deployed Treaty-violating missiles, which has put European security at risk. There has been no request from the US to deploy new missiles to Europe. As NATO made clear in a recent statement, the Alliance “continues to closely review the security implications of Russian intermediate-range missiles and will continue to take steps necessary to ensure the credibility and effectiveness of the Alliance’s overall deterrence and defence posture. Allies will continue to consult each other regularly with a view to ensuring our collective security.”

Received 20 March 2019