The planned increase in the number of British nuclear warheads

Much of the credit for creating the UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which entered into force in 1970, was due to the Harold Wilson’s 1964-1970 Labour government.

To comply with this treaty, for over 50 years, every British government – whether Labour or Conservative – has followed a policy of slowly reducing the number of British nuclear weapons … until Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced, in 2021, that the planned reduction in nuclear warheads from “no more than 225” to “no more than 180” would instead be replaced by an increase in British nuclear warheads to “no more than 260”.

No satisfactory explanation has been given for this increase in nuclear warheads. Whilst successive governments have claimed that Britain has maintained a “minimum deterrent”, the real question now is “what can be achieved with 260 nuclear warheads that can’t be achieved with 180 nuclear weapons ?“

Clearly any potential enemy who is not deterred by the threat of 180 or 225 nuclear warheads is not going to be deterred by the threat of 260 nuclear warheads. Equally clearly, producing, storing and maintaining 260 nuclear warheads is going to cost more that producing, storing and maintaining 225 or 180 nuclear warheads; that money could surely be put to many other uses.

I hope that you will oppose this increase in the number of British nuclear warheads, and that you will try to persuade the Labour government to cancel the increase in British nuclear warheads, so that we return to the previous cross-party consensus policy of gradually reducing the number of British nuclear warheads.