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Extract from a speech by Peter Blaker, Minister for the Armed Forces, Prospective Conservative Parliamentary Candidate Blackpool North, to the Bradford Businessmens Association, Bradford College, Great Horton Road, on Friday 13th May 1983

The Labour Party's defence policy is as naive and reckless as the Children's Crusade of 800 years ago in which thousands of children set off from Western Europe to walk to Jerusalem, convinced that, by their innocence and the power of their example, they would convert the Saracens to Christianity. Many died on the way. Others were martyred. The fortunate ones were sold into slavery.

Labour believe that one-sided nuclear disarmament by Britain would set an example which others would follow. But what possible incentive would there be for the Russians to negotiate seriously to get rid of their nuclear weapons if they thought that Britain would get rid of hers anyway?

The British voters can best support NATO's present efforts to obtain balanced and realistic agreements with the Russians for nuclear arms reductions by supporting the Conservative Government which has worked successfully with its NATO partners to bring the Russians to the negotiating table. The West has made some 15 arms control agreements with the Russians since 1949. We may now have a chance of moving on to a new phase of actual nuclear arms reductions. But we will only do this if the NATO Allies are patient, resolute and united. We shall not do it by the irresponsible gamble which Labour

asks us to take, which would damage the prospects of getting disarmament by both sides and deal a shattering blow to the NATO Alliance which has kept the peace successfully for well over 30 years.

END