

Nuclear Disarmament Cross Party Group

Wednesday 9th March 2017, 12.45pm

Present (Parliamentarians)

Bill Kidd MSP
Richard Leonard MSP
Gordon MacDonald MSP
Patrick Harvie MSP

Present (civil society)

David Mackenzie (Nukewatch)
Janet Fenton (WILPF & SCND)
Jenny Holt (Bill Kidd staff)
Maria Krug (for Linda Fabiani MSP)
Vanessa Gonzalez (UN House Scotland)
Gavin McGilvray (SNPCND)
Guy Johnson (MEDACT)
Sheena Holden (MEDACT)
Anne Scott (WILPF)
Jane Tallents (Trident Ploughshares)
Brian Larkin (Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre)
Arthur West (SCND)
Veronika Tudhope (SCND)

The meeting was chaired by Bill Kidd MSP

1. INTRODUCTIONS, MINUTES MATTERS ARISING

CAAT will send Melanie Scott as representative to future meetings

Decisions taken at the meeting on the 17th November and 18th January were ratified.

2. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY_

UN Ban Treaty negotiations

New York, March and June/July

The UN preparative discussion of arrangements emphasised the importance of the contribution already made to the process through civil society participation and identified the need to ensure that this would continue. The inclusion of non member states as observers was also raised, with particular support from Ireland and Iran. Bill has had some discussion on this subject with Elaine White, ambassador to the UN for Costa Rica, who will be chairing the conferences, with particular reference to Scotland's position. Bill will be attending in his capacity as a co-convenor of PNND, and can represent the nuclear disarmament cross party group of the Scottish Parliament but not the Scottish Government. Janet will attend for SCND and WILPF.

In Scotland, the ICAN global week of action had involved a great deal of activity with MPs and MSPs at a number street stalls and other events and there had been media coverage at (Scottish) national and local levels. (the National, the Herald, on social media and online.) Bill and Janet will attend the March negotiations along with reps from MEDACT and CAAT, and a working group of SCND and the wider Scottish Peace Movement is set

to accredit, train and raise fund for 4 campaigners to attend in June/July. (There will be other UK campaigners in attendance in March)
Reaching Critical Will have produced new briefing and recommendations which will be circulated.

The Non Proliferation Treaty Review preparatory committee
meets in Vienna in May. Civil society representatives attending can highlight the need for the UK Government to meet the treaty's obligations for disarmament, and request that they could be participating in the global ban discussions. Bill, Janet and Veronika can attend.

Hibakusha (Atomic bomb survivors)

During the March negotiations 2 visitors from Japan, a Hibakusha in her 80s and a second generation Hibakusha will visit the Scottish Parliament and the Peace Camp in order to highlight the negotiations and Scotland's support for the Ban Treaty. They arrive Tuesday 28th March and will be hosted by WILPF for the duration of their stay. On Wednesday 29th March they will visit Faslane and the peace camp, organised by Helensburgh CND, and on Thursday 30th March the Scottish Parliament for an MSP guided tour in the morning, VIP attendance at First Ministers Question Time and a meeting with the FM at 2.30pm.

The Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre will host a visit there later in the day where the Hibakusha can see the origami paper cranes there and be advised about the project. Details of this and the parliamentary arrangements will be finalised over the next week. Scottish CND are supporting the visit and civil society representatives will be encouraged to attend at Faslane, in the public gallery of the parliament and at the Peace and Justice Centre.

Working group

SCND and the wider peace movement have formed a strong and active working group committed to raising awareness and intense activity in support of the Ban Treaty and bringing activity to the attention of MSPs along with suggestions for activity. Representation of 3 parties on the XPG clarifies the strength of opposition to nuclear weapons at the Scottish Parliament and Bill invited all MSPs to speak out in support of the ban and stressed the need to maximise press coverage in Scotland and beyond. The group will invite MSPs to consider attending especially during recess in July.

PNND visitor from Kazakhstan

Marzhan Nurzhan

Parliamentarians for Non Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament's Coordinator for the former Soviet countries will attend Parliament on 14th March to consider the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and the example of Kazakhstan civil society in relinquishing them when they gained independence because so many people living there today suffer genetic damage caused by the tests. The event will include an announcement by Bill Kidd MSP on the nomination he made for a prestigious award to go to Kazakhstan anti-nuclear leaders.

3. POLITICAL UK

Parliamentary CND group

Several MPs have expressed interest in joint working between the Scottish XPG and PCND although a meeting is logistically hard to organise. Russell Whiting (CND UK

Parliamentary Office) could offer a briefing to MSPs. It was agreed to reconsider this possibility after the March Ban Treaty negotiations.

4. **SCOTTISH ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES**

Radiation danger in Helensburgh

Navy not Nuclear raised the issue of community health and environmental risks from radioactive tritium leaks near Helensburgh and the uncertainties for civilians living near the base. She has sent a paper to WILPF who will report back.

Convoys

There has been a lull in activity recently. The Nukewatch report on local authority readiness will be available towards the end of March

140,000 Oragami Cranes

The exhibition proposal will be considered by the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB). Criteria are impartiality, and historical/cultural value. Atsuko Betchaku, the initiator, sadly died at the start of February and The Peace and Justice Centre have committed to completing her project. MSPs can speak to their rep on the SPCB to give support to the exhibition.

Constitutional clause

All political parties will be asked to support a clause in any proposed constitution declaring Scotland a nuclear free state. MSPs can request a manifesto pledge from their parties, to make it part of the future political aspiration of as many parties as possible. Appropriate wording could be used in a similar way at Westminster. The wording suggested by SCND is to be circulated with this in mind.

Local elections

SCND and the wider peace movement are requesting declarations of opposition to nuclear convoys in their constituencies as part of local election manifestos for May's local authority elections. The queries and responses undertaken by Mark Ruskel MSP's office for Nukewatch are recommended to MSPs and party representatives who may be asked about this. SCND are compiling other questions for candidates and parties.

Disarmament camp

8th-16th July at Peaton Wood organised by Trident Ploughshares for maximum disruption at Faslane and Coulport, immediately following the conclusion of planned Ban Treaty Negotiations. Everyone is welcome and it was pointed out to MSPs that the camp will occur during recess.

5. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** tbc