

Nuclear Disarmament Cross Party Group

Tuesday 27th June 2017, 1pm

Chaired by Bill Kidd MSP

Present (Parliamentarians)

Bill Kidd MSP

Claudia Beamish MSP

Jenny Holt (Parliamentary Assistant to Bill Kidd MSP)

Present (civil society)

Gari Don (UNA Scotland)

Anne Scott (WILPF)

Jane Tallents (Trident Ploughshares)

Brian Larkin (Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre)

David Mackenzie (Nuke watch)

Veronika Tudhope (SCND)

Fergus Kell (UN House, Scotland)

Michael Orgel (Medact Scotland)

Guy Johnson (Medact Scotland)

Tony Wilkes (Quakers)

Amy Christison (UN House Scotland)

Flavia Tudoreanu (Scottish CND)

Apologies

Sandra White MSP

Alison Johnston MSP

Elaine Smith MSP

Arthur West

1. Introduction, Minutes and Matters arising

2. International Activity

Update Ban Treaty negotiations

Flavia presented a report from New York (attached) and mentioned that Bill Kidd is due to travel out to join the negotiations at the end of the week.

Questions from Claudia about disinvestment and a discussion around this subject followed. Michael said in Scotland there has been an increase in disinvestment as a result of the knowledge that a treaty is being negotiated and that there are implications for RBS and the Scottish parliamentary pensions fund. Financing may be named specifically or referred to under 'assisting' in the section dealing with prohibiting and assisting development of nuclear weapons. Michael believes campaigning will be greatly aided if the word 'financing' is used in the treaty as it outlaws investments. 'Assistance' can be read as 'financing'. Flavia mentioned that there is a willingness among delegates to the conference to use the word financing but some countries prefer the word 'assisting'. The wording of the treaty will affect what is considered to be financial assistance. In any case the treaty is likely to affect the value of investment in Nuclear weapons. It was mentioned that the 'Don't Bank on the Bomb' group is still awaiting an opportunity to attend the relevant committee at the Scottish parliament that deals the the parliamentary pension fund. In 2016 the Scottish government issued guidance that pension schemes should not make decision purely on ethical grounds. The current situation could be seen as contradictory when the Scottish parliament has expressed an opinion against nuclear weapons but still continues to invest in them.

Michael also drew attention to an impressive statement submitted to the conference by International Physicians and to prevent Nuclear War, The International Council of Nurses and the World federation of public health associations

Amy said that it is likely that the UK will be the first weapons state to sign because of Scotland position as a reluctant host. She also mentioned that mainstream media coverage has been poor worldwide. She emphasised that from the 7th July we all need to work hard to encourage the UK government to sign up.

It had been hoped to make a connection with Janet in New York but this was not possible due to technical difficulties.

The chair thanked Flavia, Amy and Michael for their contribution.

When Bill attends next week he will deliver a statement of support to the UN chair from the First Minister.

The NPT prep comm.

Bill Kidd attended in Vienna in May. Despite many Nuclear weapons states and nuclear weapons host states being present there was an awareness that the big story was in the New York with the UN. The Israeli disarmament movement, which is in a very difficult situation, raised the idea of a WMD free zone in the Middle East. This conference will take

place in Scotland with Israel and other Middle Eastern delegates. Gary Donn pointed out that there was such a conference in Scotland in 2012 and she hopes the coming one can build on it. Medact recorded their wish to help as much as possible.

3. Political developments in the UK

Post election position

It is difficult to judge what is happening as there is some uncertainty about the position of the current government. We hope for more clarity after the summer recess.

Westminster CND group

We have found it difficult to connect and will try again after the summer. The recent election and change of MPs may provide a further opportunity.

4. Scottish activities and Opportunities

Paper cranes update

Funding is now in place to for a curator for the exhibition; Jenny will make connection between Brian and the Events and Exhibitions team.

Nukewatch

The last convoy reached Scotland on 16th May, following a breakdown in England the previous day. It was well tracked by members of the public. Each convoy brings more engagement on social media.

This afternoon Nukewatch will hand Paul Wheelhouse MSP, a draft of the report on threats and contingency plans for convoys. This report will be published once a comment has been received from the Scottish Government.

Coulport Disarmament Camp

A preparatory visit has been made to Peaton Wood. Over 60 people have booked to come from Scotland, and abroad. There are different and varied activities planned, it is hoped that this camp will help focus mainstream media on the activities at New York. There will also be opportunities for different generations of protestors to meet and get to know each other.

5. AOCB

There will be updates on nuclearban.scot after the 7th July, including a list of countries which have signed the treaty. Everyone is encouraged to publicise information about the treaty.

6. Date of next meeting

After 1st September 2017, to be agreed