

# NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT CROSS PARTY GROUP

THURSDAY 21st MARCH 2019

1:30pm – 2:30pm

MINUTES

## **Present: (Visiting speaker)**

Chuck Johnson is director of the Nuclear Programme of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), a 1985 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate organisation made up of national medical groups in 64 countries, representing tens of thousands of doctors, medical student, and other health workers. It a global federation of physician experts who can provide robust evidence-led medical and scientific facts about nuclear war to policy makers and to the public, and advocate for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Chuck represents IPPNW on the International Steering Group of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), winner of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize and lead NGO in support of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. He formerly served as a United Nations representative in New York for the International Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities.

## **Present (Parliamentarians)**

Bill Kidd MSP (Chair)

Mark Ruskell MSP

Alison Johnson MSP

Patrick Harvie MSP

## **Parliamentary staff**

Jenny Olson attended with Bill Kidd MSP

Sabrina Galella attended on behalf of Claudia Beamish MSP

## **Non MSP members**

Arthur West (Scottish CND)

Emma Cockburn (Scottish CND staff)

David Mackenzie (Trident Ploughshares)

Gari Donn (United Nations Association Scotland & UN House Scotland)

Guy Johnson (Medact Scotland)

Carol Acutt (Soko Gaki International - UK)

Tony Wilkes (Quakers)

Pete Roche (NFLA)

Jean Anderson (Scottish CND sec.)

Gordon Dickson (Scottish Greens CND)

Richard Dyer (MEDACT),

Peter Cheer (Northern Friends Peace Board)

Dr Michael Orgel (MEDACT)

Rebecca Robinson (IPPNW)

Judith McDonald (MEDACT)

Janet Fenton (CPG group secretary - Scottish CND, ICAN)

**Apologies:** Bill Butler (NFLA), Brian Larkin (Edinburgh P & J), Jane Tallents (Nukewatch) and Steve Davies

## **1. Bill Kidd welcomed all and introduced our guest**

## **2. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY**

**2.1 TPNW Eif** Chuck Johnson gave an update of US and ICAN international work on entry into force, noting that several member states are very close to ratification. The strong support from states like Thailand New Zealand has helped to ensure that states like the Philippines which still have work to do are confirming their commitment even if they are not quite at the point of ratification. Chuck highlighted US activity and participation in the ICAN Cities campaign. IPPNW's main contribution to that has been the important new update to the original IPPNW report, Nuclear Famine, which tells how a small nuclear weapons exchange could impact across the world. The scenario is calculated on theoretical breakdown of relations between India and Pakistan, and the update was released in December. (<https://www.ippnw.org/pdf/nuclear-famine-two-billion-at-risk-2013.pdf>) Chuck noted that INF withdrawal is an indicator that only complete prohibition ie the TPNW can prevent the deterioration in relations between Nuclear Armed states putting the whole world in danger.

### **2.2 NPT PREPCOM**

Bill Kidd MSP (PNND) and Janet Fenton (Acronym/ICAN) will be in attendance, this Preparatory Committee Meeting (29 April – 10 May) will set the agenda for the first NPT Review to take place since the adoption of the TPNW, so it is importance to ensure that the TPNW and its impact on the TPNW is on that agenda. The Acronym Institute, as an ICAN Steering Group organisation, will be hosting a side event on how treaties inter relate, and given the UK's claim to a democratic mandate, the presence of a Scottish Green MSP during the conference would help diplomats from outside the UK to understand that opposition to the UK's nuclear policy is wider than a party political SNP perspective. Support can be offered by Acronym and ICAN for MSPs requiring accreditation to attend.

### **2.3 IRELAND**

Janet reported on meetings hosted by Scottish CND on NATO, Brexit, PESCO and Europe with European visitors in February 2019. Visitors included the director the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA), an Irish NGO network which is committed to opposing Irish membership of NATO and support for the protection of Irish sovereignty and neutrality in Europe. The SCND meetings were reported to the Oireachtas PANA Group (58 TD's who sit in the Irish Parliament) who would like to make links with like-minded MSPs. Patrick Harvie MSP supports moving forward with these connections and also Bill Kidd MSP.

## **3. POLITICAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE UK (Updates only)**

### **3.1 Report from Parliamentary CND**

was tabled, noting EDMs currently open for signature. We also had a paper tabled of work done at Holyrood that is reported in the Parliamentary business recored and these will be shared with Parliamentary CND.

### **3.2 ICAN Cities Campaigning**

NFLA and Mayors for Peace have taken a lead on this campaigning across the UK, most notable in Manchester and Renfrewshire. MSPs present are encouraged to work closely with local authorities to encourage communities and cities to sign up to the Cities campaign and to utilise the work done already through the Don't Bank on The Bomb divestment work as a rationale. Other groups can work on cities and communities outside of the NFLA network

## **4. SCOTTISH ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES**

### **4.1 Unready Scotland Report.**

David Mackenzie reported that no response has yet been forthcoming from the Scottish Government to the Unready Scotland report and their commitment to responding early in the year.

A convoy was seen and filmed on 20/03/2019 and that the social media response is widespread, placing extra pressure on the Scottish authorities to be transparent. Mark Ruskell MSP responded that action on nuclear convoys are a main focus of his work at the moment.

#### **4.3 Film Screening**

Scottish CND are collaborating with Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) to arrange a screening on *The War Game*. They propose that this could be hosted by the CPG in November. The proposal is in furtherance of GCU policies in making their work accessible to young people in the community of the university, so they can provide transport and make arrangements with schools for a large attendance and MSP presence would be an important contribution to the learning process. John Cook, at GCU is the leading academic on Peter Watkins, the iconic director of the film, and how it impacted on the BBC and on public awareness of nuclear weapons, and would contribute to the event. The proposal was agreed. Bill Kidd MSP noted the success of a CPG screening of *The Man Who Saved the World* last year.

#### **4.4 Secure Scotland**

A new initiative, hosted by **UN HOUSE** Thanks to the Schiehallion Trust, Rethinking Security Network ([rethinkingsecurity.org.uk](http://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk)), Scottish CND and others will host a seminar for 20 at the Allanton World Peace Centre between 16 – 18 April. MSPs are invited to participate and can contact **securescotland@unhscotland.org.uk** or contact Janet Fenton for further information.

#### **4.5 STUC Congress**

Arthur West reported that SCND will run a fringe event at the STUC congress on alternative jobs. The Peace of History exhibition by Peace Education Scotland (PES) will be shown, and PES Morality and Environmental module will be offered at the EIS AGM. Gari offered joint working with PES on UN modelling in schools.

#### **4.6 SCOTTISH GREEN CND**

The meeting welcomed the newly resuscitated Scottish Greens CND group to the meeting. It's Co Convenor Gordon Dickson noted that the purpose of this group is to see how Scottish Greens can support the work of Scottish CND and supportive elected representatives not only in the Parliament but also in City Chambers across the country.

Bill Kidd then **closed the meeting at 2.30pm**