

Minutes Nuclear Disarmament Cross Party Group Meeting

17th June 2020
(Virtual Meeting)

Lock down has impacted on work with the CPG in that the work of parliamentarians has been impacted by lockdown as well as parliamentary and governmental action being focussed on legislation and action to deal with pandemic. Initially CPG Meetings were postponed but the standard office agreed to allow virtual meeting and we were able to have a meeting on 17 June. Notes for some items and papers were circulated in advance to facilitate the virtual nature of the event. Access to the virtual platform required Bill Kidd to move to another office during the meeting.

<http://www.banthebomb.org/images/ADF2020.pdf>

<https://hiroshimaforpeace.com/en/icanacademy2020/>

<https://www.facebook.com/XRebellionUK/posts/735905850571566>

<https://www.banthebomb.org/images/stories/images/SCNDSEPACONSULTATION.pdf>

Present:

MSPs

Bill Kidd MSP

Ruth McGuire MSP

Sandra White MSP

Apology: Patrick Harvie MSP

Civil Society:

Janet Fenton - Group Secretary

Jenny Olsen Office of Bill Kidd MSP

Lesley Morrison Medact

Carol Acutt Soka Gakkai

David Mackenzie Nukewatch

Emma Cockburn Scottish CND

Mike Blackshaw Edinburgh Yes Hub

Gordon Dickson Green CND and Scottish CND Secretary

Fiona McOwan Scottish CND and WILPF

Lynn Jamieson Chair Scottish CND

Gari Donn UN House Scotland

Guy Johnson MEDACT

Brian Larkin P & J

1. Formal launch of **Assuring Destruction Forever** publication. The UK section author is CPG Secretary Janet Fenton. Published by Reaching Critical Will in tandem with Scottish CND. This is a reference document on the UK's nuclear modernisation document, prepared for the NPT (postponed) and a useful resource for all for all campaigners and MSPs

2. **Convoys and preparedness.** David Mackenzie noted that Nukewatch has now got a reply from the Minister for Community Safety to their letter raising concerns about the adequacy of the Nuclear Weapons Convoy Preparedness Review which followed the parliamentary debate in May 2018. Nukewatch regards the ministerial response as very disappointing and perhaps heralding a dead end in engagement with the Minister. Nukewatch is now considering writing with an update to those MSPs who played such a positive part in the 2018 debate. Bill Kidd pointed out that there was value in ministerial engagement and suggested that one way forward would be for Nukewatch to send him and Ruth McGuire an indication of its concerns which could then be the basis for representation to the Minister. David accepted that this was worth trying in the first instance.

3. **75th Anniversary of Hiroshima** and Nagasaki Atomic Bombings.

3.1 Scottish CND and organisations around the world will be using the peace crane as the symbol for this anniversary.

It was agreed to ask all parliamentarians:

- to get involved with events held by local SCND groups and the wider peace movement in their constituencies relating to the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,
- to circulate ICAN materials and resources available for this activity, and
- to participate in the windows for peace initiative.

3.2 P&J is presenting Michael Mears reading from Hiroshima by John Hersey at Just Festival 16 -23 Aug. New Peace Cranes Exhibition Curator Iliyana Nedkova will present a Cranes workshop at ECND event. Peace Boat offers an Academy Opportunity to students/young professionals under 25. XR Peace discussion 'What is Real Security' with Rebecca Johnson and Janet Fenton

4. Reflections on NPT and the UN (postponed)

4.1 Bill Kidd MSP attended the virtual Fringe Meeting hosted by CND. (originally planned as a side event for New York) Bill Kidd's participation was widely appreciated. Jenny Olsen pointed out that the meeting had an attendance of 6000 and had been well received. Jeremy Corbyn had spoken eloquently about the need to invest in social needs rather than weapons of mass destruction.

4.2 We also supported the FM support for 24 May Womens' Day for Nuclear Disarmament and thanked Bill for keeping nuclear disarmament issues before the parliament so regularly and directly.

4.3 Janet reported that RCW had highlighted concerns about civil society input to the UN arising from the pandemic restrictions and the lost opportunities for ICAN in building support for the TPNW.

5. Radiation Risk

It was agreed to follow up on radiation risk examination in relation to nuclear power in Scotland as well as the potential for increased radiation pollution of the Gare Loch and to highlight the relationships and causalities as well as Scottish Government obligations regarding community safety. Lynn Jamieson has responded to a SEPA consultation (with copies to relevant Scottish Government Ministers) to register opposition to the proposal to permit the MoD to increase its discharge of radiological materials into the Gare Loch by a factor of 50. The group agreed that it would be worthwhile to seek parliamentary support for a statement of opposition provided by the SCND Radiation Risks Working Group. SCND Radiation Risk Working group will progress this.

6. CPG Support for Kingsbay Ploughshares

6.1 Sentencing for most is postponed till November.

6.2 The activists and many US supporters expressed appreciation of the CPG's open letter to the judge in support of the CPG for the Kings Bay Ploughshares.

7. CPG Civil society membership

7.1 It was agreed to add Secure Scotland to the civil society membership

7.2 Thanks were offered to Emma Cockburn who is leaving SCND.

7.3 It is hoped that Emma will continue in attendance in her new role with CAAT.