

c/o Justice & Peace Scotland,
65 Bath Street,
GLASGOW.
G2 2BX.

12th March 2007.

All Scottish MP's
House of Commons,
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Dear _____,

We are writing to you on behalf of Scotland's major Churches to voice our opposition to the replacement of the Trident Nuclear Weapons System. We are urging you to vote against the Government's proposals when they are debated in the House of Commons on 14th March.

The gravity of the issue and their unity of opposition led to an innovative joint message for New Year 2007 from the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Right Reverend Alan McDonald and the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland, Cardinal Keith O'Brien. Their message stated:

'This year there is a wonderful opportunity for our Westminster parliamentarians finally to take steps to fulfil the obligations this country made many years ago to rid itself of nuclear weapons. We pray that our MPs will make a stand for the principles of peace, and will have the courage to refuse to endorse a replacement for Trident. Peace cannot be advanced by the commissioning of new weapons of mass destruction.'

Many of Scotland's Churches have a long history of opposition to nuclear weapons, rooted in their own social traditions.

- 'If it is immoral to use these [nuclear] weapons, it is also immoral to threaten their use.' Catholic Bishops' of Scotland, 1982.
- In May 2006 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland restated its long-held view on the immorality of nuclear weapons and called on the Government not to renew Trident.
- In April 2006 the Catholic Bishops of Scotland called for Trident not to be replaced but rather decommissioned and the money saved to be spent on programmes of aid and development.
- 'To replace Trident would represent a further announcement to the world that safety and security can only be achieved by threatening mass destruction; this is to encourage others to believe the same, and thus to hasten proliferation.' The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 2006.

The objection of the Churches shares many of the arguments of those in civil society opposed to maintaining nuclear weapons. It is, we believe, contrary to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, which is, in effect, an agreement between

nuclear states (who undertake to reduce progressively their reliance on nuclear weapons) and non-nuclear states (who undertake not to develop such capacity). It would be the ultimate in hypocrisy for the UK to argue that Iran, for example, should not be developing a nuclear weapons capability, while at the same time extending the UK capability in scope and in time.

A petition with around 20,000 signatures, sponsored by the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Catholic Church in Scotland, and supported by Christians from many denominations, stating that Trident should not be replaced, was handed into the Ministry of Defence on 1st December 2006.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Rev Dr Graham K Blount, Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office
Geoffrey Carnall, Religious Society of Friends
Rev John O. Fulton, General Secretary, United Free Church of Scotland
Rev John LI. Humphreys, Moderator, Synod of Scotland, United Reform Church
Dr Richard McCready, National Secretary, Justice and Peace Commission,
Bishops' Conference of Scotland
The Right Reverend Alan D McDonald, Moderator of the General Assembly of
the Church of Scotland
Morag Mylne, Convener of the Church and Society Council of the General
Assembly of the Church of Scotland
Nancy Adams, Convener, Church in Society Committee, Scottish Episcopal
Church
Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien, Archbishop of St. Andrew's and Edinburgh,
President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland