

## **NATO and Nuclear Weapons**

### **Reception on 13 November 2009 in the Scottish Parliament for delegates attending the NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

#### **Attendance**

The host of the meeting was Bill Kidd MSP. The meeting was arranged by Scotland's for Peace and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non Proliferation and Disarmament.<sup>1</sup>

27 delegates to the NATO parliamentary assembly attended from Austria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway and from the European Security and Defence Assembly.

23 representatives attended from the Church of Scotland, Scottish Catholic Church, Scottish Episcopal Church, Scotland's for Peace, Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Justice and Peace Scotland, Edinburgh Justice and Peace Centre, Greenpeace, Iona Community, MEDACT, Nuclear Free Local Authorities/Mayors for Peace, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non Proliferation and Disarmament, Kilmarnock & Loudon Trades Council, Scottish Churches Housing Action, Scottish Green Party and the United Nations Association Edinburgh.

Prior to the meeting visitors were given a guided tour around the Scottish Parliament building.

#### **Introduction**

Bill Kidd MSP welcomed delegates from the Parliamentary Assembly and the representatives of organisations from Scotland and elsewhere. Birgitta Jónsdóttir (Iceland) read a poem.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by music from David Ferrard, Lisa Mulholland and Hamish Macdonald.<sup>3</sup>

Bill Kidd read a message from Bruce Crawford MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business in the Scottish Government, which said "we are delighted to add the Scottish Government's voice to those committed to nuclear disarmament ... the Scottish Government is committed to play a leading role in this matter subject to the present arrangements."

#### **Speakers**

##### Senator Tiny Kox (Netherlands)

The fall of the Berlin wall opened up a window of opportunity for arms reductions, but this closed. The confrontation in Georgia showed that there are new dangers. The election of President Obama provides a new window of opportunity. NATO is rethinking its Strategic Concept and this will be discussed by all of the Parliamentary Assembly committees. Part of this discussion should be consideration of how to promote nuclear disarmament, particularly in the light of the obligations of the NPT. This may seem impossible but in Germany the impossible happened, with the fall of the Berlin wall and today the German Government are calling for the removal of US nuclear weapons. It was important to send a signal of support to President Obama. Belgium and Germany are already

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<sup>1</sup> [www.scotland4peace.org](http://www.scotland4peace.org) [www.gsstitute.org/pnnd/](http://www.gsstitute.org/pnnd/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://this.is/birgitta/>

<sup>3</sup> [www.davidferrard.com](http://www.davidferrard.com)

doing this by saying that they would like nuclear weapons removed. It would be helpful if the Netherlands did the same although our government are not brave enough. Citizens should help politicians to be more brave, we have seen this in Iceland and Germany. Let us realise that we don't need or want nuclear arms and use this window of opportunity to take new steps to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Alyn Ware (Global Coordinator, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non Proliferation and Disarmament)

New Zealand feels more comfortable for having come out from under the nuclear umbrella.

Parliamentarians can be closer to the people than diplomats and so can be more positive about the prospects for disarmament.

The Non Proliferation Treaty review conference in May 2010 will be crucial. NATO states can play an important role as they did in the 13 steps agreed at the 2000 NPT review conference. The 2005 review conference was not a success. North Korea has carried out nuclear tests. Iran and a number of Arab states are interested in developing nuclear weapons. So the 2010 review conference is very important.

Non-Nuclear states complain that Nuclear Weapon States are not meeting their obligations under Article VI of the NPT Treaty. Nuclear power is linked to the capability to produce nuclear weapons and there is a need for new constraints and safeguards on nuclear power.

It was important to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in NATO strategic doctrine. Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ) are important steps to nuclear disarmament and part of the process. Pugwash have proposed that a NWFZ could be created in the Arctic. One already exists in the Antarctic. A NWFZ could be created in Europe or Central Europe. Initially this would not include those countries with nuclear weapons on their territory, but it could include member of NATO who have no nuclear weapons on their soil. This zone could then be expanded as nuclear weapons are removed from other nations. There are people who are supporting the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, including Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, William Perry and George Shultz.

A significant recent development is the draft Nuclear Weapons Convention. In addition the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon is promoting a 5 point plan for nuclear disarmament. The elimination of nuclear weapons is not just an idea, it is a practical possibility. In his Prague speech and in his video presentation to the NPT Preparatory Committee President Obama is showing a lead. Diplomats are too cautious to pick up the ball. But there is a need to emulate the domino effect of the recent Berlin wall anniversary event.

Isobel Lindsay (Convenor, Scotland's for Peace)<sup>4</sup>

Scotland's for Peace is a joint initiative by civic Scotland. It includes the churches, trade unions and a range of other organisations. All of the UK's nuclear weapons are in Scotland and it would be very difficult to relocate them to elsewhere in Britain. Public opinion in Scotland is opposed to these nuclear weapons. The Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament, and the majority of MPs in the House of Commons who represent Scottish constituencies are against the development of a new

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<sup>4</sup> [www.scotland4peace.org](http://www.scotland4peace.org)

nuclear weapon system to replace Trident. Trident renewal would commit the UK to great expense and to having nuclear weapons for the next 50 years. There has been a delay in placing the contracts for this plan.

The existing UK nuclear weapon system is assigned to NATO. Replacing it would be in breach of the NPT. We would like parliamentarians from other countries to challenge the UK Government on the basis of the NPT Treaty.

There are hopeful signs and Obama is genuine. But Europe should be more active in encouraging progress. The proposal for a Nuclear Free Zone in Europe should be promoted. The review of the Strategic Concept provides an opportunity for looking again at the role of nuclear weapons in Europe. There is a danger that in the pressure to build consensus some voices may be ignored.

Sean Morris (UK spokesperson for Mayors for Peace & Secretary UK Nuclear Free Local Authorities)<sup>5</sup>

70 local authorities in the UK are members of Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA). Based in Manchester, which was the world's first NLFA. Around the world there are 3,250 Mayors for Peace. Local government want to help national governments to reframe their priorities. Both NFLA and Mayors for Peace have a strong presence in Scotland. The focus now is on the 2010 NPT review. Mayors for Peace argue that NATO's nuclear weapons' sharing policy violates Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT. We welcome the recent statement from the German government about the removal of nuclear weapons and encourage Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey to do the same. NATO should cease training and equipping aircraft for nuclear war.

Local Authorities from around the world are endorsing the Hiroshima/Nagasaki protocol which calls for a firm timetable to strengthen the NTP by 2015 towards a world without nuclear weapons by 2020.<sup>6</sup> There will be a major demonstration in New York and lobbying of the conference. Mayors for Peace is seeking to meet with the UK and Irish governments to discuss this. It should be noted that the UK election is likely to be close to the time of the NPT conference.

## **Discussion**

Birgitta Jónsdóttir (Iceland)

The policy of the new Iceland government is that Iceland should become a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and that they would work on nuclear disarmament in a worldwide context.

Dr Rainer Stinner (Germany)

A member of one of the parties (FDP) in the coalition Government. Is Obama's proposal for disarmament a dream, a vision or a plan? One of the main topics for the German Foreign Minister will be further disarmament, but we need to be realistic. We don't feel safer for having nuclear weapons on our soil, but neither do we feel unsafe. Nuclear weapons are old stuff that we don't need anymore. It would be a good symbolic move to get rid of them. But I don't think Iran will give up its plans for nuclear weapons because of what Germany does, they have their own agenda.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.mayorsforpeace.org](http://www.mayorsforpeace.org) and <http://nfznscc.gn.apc.org/>

<sup>6</sup> [www.2020visioncampaign.org](http://www.2020visioncampaign.org)

Heikki Holmas (Norway)

We want to engage in a debate on NATO nuclear strategy and on how NATO can play a role in building a nuclear-weapons' free world. My political party had its origins in opposition to NATO nuclear weapons in the 1960s and was now part of the coalition government. We hope we can, along with Germany and others, play a role in changing NATO nuclear policy.

Alistair Cameron (Scottish Churches Housing Action)

An important issue was the opportunity cost of replacing Trident. There is a need for a budget to provide affordable housing and there is less money to pay for it this year.

Paul Schäfer (Germany)

There is a particular window of opportunity in Germany. There is a new public debate and there has been an important shift in the position of the CDU party who now say that they share Obama's vision for nuclear disarmament. Social Democrats, Greens and Liberals are now all arguing for the removal of nuclear weapons from Germany. A meeting was held last week with Mayors for Peace and with religious groups to start a new campaign for nuclear disarmament in Germany.

CLlr Audrey Doig (Nuclear Free Local Authorities)

As the mother of a family living within 10 miles of the stockpile of nuclear weapons I am concerned that these systems are operated by humans and that one day there could be an accident. From a mother's point of view – please take them away.

Dr Duncan MacIntyre (MEDACT)

Britain's nuclear weapons are more to do with the macho concept that Britain needs nuclear weapons.

Alyn Ware (Global Coordinator, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non Proliferation and Disarmament)

On the issue of whether Obama has a vision or a plan – this should be raised with him when he goes to Norway to collect the Nobel Peace Prize and also when the US publishes the Nuclear Posture Review.

Some figures in the US are arguing that these nuclear weapons are needed for America's allies. It is important that these allies say clearly that they don't need them. We should let our colleagues and the media know that in the different world of today there is no place for nuclear weapons.

With regard to Nuclear Weapons Free Zones the situation in North East Asia is more complex than in Europe, but it is being seriously examined. There will be a conference for countries who are members of NWFZs prior to the NPT conference.

Thanks were expressed to the Parliamentarians and civic society representatives who took part. It was pointed out that it will be the voice of civic society that will push parliamentarians to act.