



Joint Press Release Mayors for Peace UK / NFLA English Forum



For immediate release, 6th May 2011

Mayors, councillors and NGOs meet to discuss alternatives to Trident

In these difficult financial times, the UK Government has recently announced its 'Initial Gate' decision allowing for substantial expenditure in the design phase of new 'Trident' submarines and missiles. It has also announced a parallel Cabinet Office review of the possible alternatives to replacing the Trident weapons system, chaired by Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey.

Mayors for Peace, one of the largest local government organisations in the world, and led by the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is keen to be involved in this debate as the international voice for local government on nuclear weapons issues. It is co-operating with the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) to bring such issues to Mayors, councillors and interesting groups.

The UK Mayors for Peace Working Group has developed a joint seminar with the NFLA English Forum to consider the future options to the UK's nuclear weapons policy. The seminar is being hosted by the Lord Mayor of Oxford, Councillor Elise Benjamin, and councils from across the UK will be present, along with a number of non-governmental groups working on this issue.

The seminar will consider a number of issues:

- How much will Trident cost and are there cheaper, more practical options?
- In a time of major defence and local government expenditure cuts, what is the most cost-effective policy for UK security?
- What do MPs think of UK nuclear weapons policy?
- What impacts will it have on Aldermaston, Burghfield, Faslane, Coulport and the regular movements of nuclear weapons transport around the UK?
- What are the views and alternative options of groups opposed to Trident replacement?
- What role does the Mayors for Peace play on a national and international level in the campaign to reduce the world's stockpile of nuclear weapons?

Speakers for the seminar include Paul Ingram, the Executive Director of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) and Kate Hudson, the Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

Lord Mayor of Oxford, Councillor Elise Benjamin, said:

"I'm honoured to be hosting this joint seminar and am looking forward to a productive day which I hope will help lead to a much needed shift in thinking on the future of nuclear weapons."

NFLA English Forum Secretary, Councillor Ralph Pryke, said:

"I am pleased we are holding this seminar in Oxford to discuss UK nuclear weapon policy. All UK Councils are having to deal with large cuts to expenditure and we have also just heard of major cuts to UK conventional defence forces. Should we then be willing to spend billions on an expensive nuclear weapons system or looking at better, safer, cheaper and more sustainable peaceful alternatives? I think so and I look forward to discussing this in more detail with Mayors, councillors and nuclear weapon concerned groups."

Ends

For more information please contact Sean Morris on 07771 930196.

Notes for Editors:

1. Mayors for Peace is an international non-government organisation representing over 4,800

mayors and local authorities globally from 151 countries and regions. The organisation was formed by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the two Japanese cities devastated by atomic bombs in 1945. In the UK Mayors for Peace has 65 members, including the Mayors of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Oxford, Reading, Leeds, and Bristol. The Nuclear Free Local Authorities is a local authority organisation representing over 50 Councils which works on a cross-party basis for local authorities concerned about all nuclear policy issues including nuclear power, new nuclear build, nuclear safety, radioactive waste management and nuclear weapons proliferation. Some of its leading members in England include Manchester, Hull, Leeds, Rotherham and Oxford.

2. The programme for the afternoon seminar is as follows:
Mayors for Peace / NFLA English Forum joint seminar
Trident replacement – what are the options and the alternatives?
Mayors Parlour, Oxford Town Hall, Friday 8th July 2011

12.30pm	Registration: Tea/Coffee
1.00pm	Welcomes: Councillor Elise Benjamin, Lord Mayor of Oxford and Councillor Ralph Pryke, NFLA England Chair.
1.05pm	Paul Ingram, Executive Director, British American Information Security Council (BASIC) – Trident replacement: what next? The work of the cross-party Trident Commission.
1.30pm	Stephen Hendry, Nuclear Information Service, Reading – The Anglo-French Defence Treaty and developments at Aldermaston and Burghfield.
1.55pm	Kate Hudson, General Secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) – the No Trident Replacement coalition and developing the alternatives to nuclear weapons.
2.20pm	Sean Morris, UK Mayors for Peace Working Group Secretary – how the Mayors for Peace coalition is influencing the nuclear disarmament debate.
2.45pm	Panel Discussion
3.00pm	Conclusion