



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

Media release - for immediate release, 3rd March 2010

Trident replacement, the NPT and nuclear weapons convoys – NFLA English Forum asks some searching questions and uncovers possible gaps in planning

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities English Forum are holding its spring seminar considering the potential for success of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Conference, whether there is a need for Trident replacement and the safety and emergency planning arrangements around nuclear weapons convoys through England and Scotland

The seminar, being held at Oxford Town Hall, on Friday 5th March (1) considers whether developing Trident replacement goes against the spirit of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty being reviewed at the United Nations this May. It will also consider the issues around the development of the Aldermaston and Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment just a few miles away from Oxford.

A key concern of the seminar will be the safety and emergency planning arrangements for nuclear weapons convoys in the UK. Convoys of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials regularly leave Aldermaston passing through Oxford up north to the Trident naval bases at Faslane and Coulport, or for waste storage in Cumbria. NFLA England has undertaken a survey of English local authorities on knowledge of, and training and planning for, the possibility of an emergency incident involving such a convoy. The questions asked derive from a Scottish Parliament report 'Scotland Without Nuclear Weapons' (2) which showed an alarming lack of knowledge of the convoys and the emergency response that may be required in an incident amongst a number of local authorities. The Scottish Government has asked Regional Resilience Forums to flag the issue with local authority emergency planning units and encourage greater multi-agency planning around the scenario. The NFLA England survey has found similar results.

Speakers at the seminar, being kindly hosted by Oxford City Council, include:

- Rebecca Johnson, Director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy
- Peter Burt, Co-ordinator of Nuclear Information Services
- Nigel Day and Margaret Downs, local organisers of Nukewatch
- Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary.

NFLA England Chair, Councillor Ralph Pryke, said:

"This NFLA England seminar raises a number of issues around the UK's nuclear deterrent Trident. I am keen to hear of the possibilities for success at the upcoming Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Conference and whether decisions on Trident replacement might negatively affect chances for nuclear disarmament. I am very concerned that there also may be an emergency planning gap for local authorities in knowledge of, and planning for, an incident involving nuclear weapons convoys. I hope the seminar will provide further information and the NFLA will be raising concerns with the UK Government and affected local authorities. I urge councillors and interested groups to attend."

Further information

Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186

Notes to Editors:

(1) NFLA England seminar, Oxford Town Hall, Friday 5th March 2010

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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FINAL PROGRAMME

10.30am	Registration: Tea/Coffee
11.00am	Welcomes: Councillor Mary Clarkson, Lord Mayor of Oxford, Councillor John Tanner, NFLA representative for Oxford City Council and Councillor Ralph Pryke, NFLA England Chair
11.10pm	Rebecca Johnson, Director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy: Trident replacement, the 2010 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference and prospects for nuclear disarmament and security.
11.40pm	Peter Burt, Nuclear Information Service, Reading – what will be the local impact of Trident replacement?
12.10pm	Nigel Day and Margaret Downs, Nukewatch – what are the local risks of nuclear weapons convoys from Aldermaston and Burghfield?
12.30pm	Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary – NFLA England survey of local emergency planning arrangements in place for nuclear convoys
12.45pm	Panel Discussion
1.00pm	Conclusion

(2) Report of the Scottish Parliament – Scotland Without Nuclear Weapons:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/14095137/13>

Ends

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