

**NFLA Conference in Inverkeithing on 26th February 2010
by Bill Kidd MSP**

CONFERENCE,

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING ME HERE
TODAY TO ADDRESS THIS CONFERENCE OF
NUCLEAR FREE LOCAL AUTHORITIES;**

**AS A FORMER GLASGOW CITY COUNCILLOR I AM
VERY AWARE OF THE ROLE THAT LOCAL
AUTHORITIES CAN PLAY IN THE EDUCATION OF
OUR CITIZENS OF THE DANGERS OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS AND OF THE DANGERS OF CIVIC
COMPLACENCY.**

**LAST YEAR I HAD THE HONOUR OF BEING MADE A
MEMBER OF THE GLOBAL COUNCIL OF PNND –
PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR NUCLEAR NON-
PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT.**

**PNND HAS OVER 700 MEMBERS IN THE
PARLIAMENTS OF MORE THAN 75 COUNTRIES
WORLD-WIDE AND HAS AN INFLUENCE OVER
POLICY ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS BOTH IN
NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS AND AT THE UNITED
NATIONS.**

**IN OCTOBER I WAS PART OF A DELEGATION
WHICH MET UN GENERAL SECRETARY BAN KI
MOON TO DISCUSS HIS FIVE-POINT-PLAN FOR
NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT:**

**UNDER THIS PLAN THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS
ADOPTED RESOLUTION 1887 WHICH CALLS FOR,**

‘PROGRESS ON ALL ASPECTS OF DISARMAMENT TO ENHANCE GLOBAL SECURITY’; AND IT GOES ON TO UNDERLINE THE NEED TO PURSUE FURTHER EFFORTS IN THE SPHERE OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 6 OF THE NPT;

‘TO PURSUE GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT UNDER STRICT AND EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL.’

1887 PARTICULARLY WELCOMES THE RENOUNCING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE-ZONES, AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PROMOTING ALL THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NPT;

HERE I BELIEVE THAT THE NFLA CAN SHOW IT STRIPES BY CONTINUING TO PRESSURE THE WESTMINSTER GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUE OF TRIDENT, IN CONCERT WITH PARLAMENTARIANS, OF ALL PARTIES, FROM BOTH THE SCOTTISH AND U.K. PARLIAMENTS.

TO HELP WITH THAT AIM THE PNND DELEGATION DISCUSSED WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION AND SUPPORT FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY AND A NORTH-EAST ASIAN NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE-ZONE;

EVERY STEP IN REMOVING THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD IS A STEP TOWARDS NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES FINDIN THEMSELVES ISOLATED;

NO MORE SO THAN WHERE THE GOVERNMENT IS ISOLATED FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF ITS OWN POPULATION.

IN THIS YEAR OF THE 2010 NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY REVIEW CONFERENCE WE HAVE BEEN HOPING FOR GENUINE MOVEMENT ON THE ISSUE OF NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE RAPROCHMENT BETWEEN OBAMA AND MEDVEDEV AT THE END OF LAST YEAR.

THE PROPOSAL WAS THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTS WOULD SIGN A PACT WHICH WOULD THEN SEE NEGOTIATORS AT THE TABLE AN AMBITIOUS AGREEMENT ON TACKLING CATAGORIES OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS NEVER INCLUDED IN NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE;

IN ADDITION TO REDUCING DEPLOYED STRATEGIC WARHEADS AND TRYING TO EMPTY VAULTS OF STORED RESERVE WARHEADS THEY WOULD TAKE AIM AT THE THOUSANDS OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR BOMBS, VULNERABLE TO THEFT OR PROLIFERATION, STILL HERE IN EUROPE 20 YEARS AFTER THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL.

HOWEVER, REAL POLITICK REARS ITS REALLY UGLY HEAD IN THE FORM OF THE ENTIRE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS IN THE U.S. SENATE, WHO HAVE ANNOUNCED THEY WILL NOT RATIFY ANY STOCKPILE REDUCTION TREATY UNLESS THE PRESIDENT COMMITS TO MODERISING THE NUCLEAR ARSENAL FIRST.

AND ON THE 29TH OF DECEMBER IN RUSSIA, PRIME MINISTER PUTIN, AT THE HEAD OF THE PRO-NUCLEAR FORCES IN THE MILITARY, ARGUED THAT U.S. MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEM PLANS WERE HINDERING TALKS ON THE NEW NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTION TREATY BECAUSE...’IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE BALANCE RUSSIA NEEDS TO DEVELOP ITS OFFENSIVE WEAPONS SYSTEMS’.

SO, THE EXCITEMENT OVER WHETHER AT LAST THE BIG TWO NUCLEAR POWERS WOULD START ON SERIOUS TALKS IN THE RUN-UP TO THE NPT REVIEW THIS YEAR APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN PREMATURE;

BUT THE INTENTIONS APPEAR TO BE THERE ON THE PART OF BOTH PRESIDENTS – WE MAY KNOW THAT MEDVEDEV IS UNDER THE ALL-POWERFUL SWAY OF PUTIN AND THAT OBAMA IS IN MANY WAYS A HOSTAGE OF THE VAGARIES OF THE SENATE,

BUT MOVES HAVE BEEN MADE WHICH AT THE TIME APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN GENUINE ENOUGH TO GIVE HOPE THAT, AS THE HISTORIAN BARBARA TUCHMAN HAS CALLED IT THE ‘WOODEN-HEADEDNESS’ OF GOVERNMENTS WHICH IS THE SOURCE OF THEIR SELF-DECEPTION - MAY HAVE BEEN OPENED UP TO FRESH-THINKING WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ON THE AGENDA EVEN IN THE VERY RECENT PAST.

THEREFORE, IT IS IMPERITIVE THAT THE GROWING MOMENTUM OF GOVERNMENTS AND PARLIAMENTS, AND CITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES MUST BE MAINTAINED.

THE PERPETRATORS OF MILITARISM FEED ON FEAR, WHICH THEY THEMSELVES PROPOGATE – EMERITUS SENETOR DOUGLAS ROCHE FROM CANADA SAYS IT’S BECAUSE POLITICAL LEADERS FEAR TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THIS FEAR THAT IT PERSISTS.

SO IT’S UP TO US IN PARLIAMENTS AND COUNCIL CHAMBERS ACROSS THE WORLD TO STAND UP AGAINST THE FEAR AND TO TEAR DOWN THE WALL OF NUCLEAR MISSILES THAT SEPARATES GOOD PEOPLE FROM ONE ANOTHER.

THIS YEARS NPT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO FAIL IN THE WAY THAT NPT 2005 DID WITH NON-NUCLEAR STATES BEING TRADED-OFF ONE AGAINST ANOTHER;

BECAUSE THE NUCLEAR WEPONS STATES ARE HOLDING APPROXIMATELY 26,000 NUCLEAR WARHEADS WITH THE EXPLOSIVE POWER 200,000 TIMES MORE DEVASTATING THAN THE BOMBS DROPPED ON HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI.

EVEN IF THE BOMBS SOMEHOW DIDN’T GET YOU, CARL SAGAN’S 1980s SIMULATION OF A ‘MODERATE-SIZED’ NUCLEAR WAR SHOWED THAT NUCLEAR WINTER WOULD ENSUE – AND THERE WOULD BE NO ROOM FOR CLIMATE-CHANGE DENIERS IN THAT SCENARIO.

SO THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY REVIEW CONFERENCE 2010 IS A MATTER FOR ALL OF US, BUT LET’S REMEMBER THAT THE NPT IS ALWAYS AN INHERENTLY DISCRIMINATORY TREATY WITH A PRIVELEDGED POSITION ACCORDED TO THE FIVE PRE-1970 NUCLEAR STATES.

REMEMBER THAT THE NPT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO STOP INDIA, PAKISTAN AND ISRAEL FROM DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY;

IT HAS BEEN POWERLESS TO STOP A NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATE FROM GAINING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE THEN WITHDRAWING FROM THE TREATY AND DEVELOPING A BOMB, AS IN THE CASE OF NORTH KOREA;

AND THE NPT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO ENFORCE ARTICLE 6 OBLIGING NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES TO NEGOTIATE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT.

BUT DESPAIR ISN'T A REFUGE WE CAN AFFORD TO INDULGE IN BECAUSE THROUGH A COORDINATED AND COMBINED APPROACH OF NEGOTIATING SPECIFIC STEPS WE CAN GET AROUND THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE RECENT PAST;

SO, A MORE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR ABOLITION PATH SUCH AS THAT RECOMMENDED BY PNND GLOBAL COORDINATOR ALYN WARE FROM NEW ZEALAND AND THE WEAPONS OF MASS-DESTRUCTION COMMISSION, HEADED BY HANS BLIX SHOWS A WAY FORWARD;

'A NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT TREATY IS ACHIEVABLE AND CAN BE REACHED THROUGH CAREFUL, SENSIBLE AND PRACTICAL MEASURES. BENCHMARKS SHOULD BE SET; DEFINITIONS AGREED; TIMETABLES DRAWN UP AND AGREED UPON; AND TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS AGREED. DISARMAMENT WORK SHOULD BE SET IN MOTION.'

AND FORMER FRENCH SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER, MICHEL ROCARD WHO TOLD ME RECENTLY THAT HE HAS GREAT ADMIRATION FOR THE DECISION OF THE SCOTTISH PARLAMENT IN 2007 TO REJECT TRIDENT IN SCOTLAND, PUT OUT A STATEMENT WITH FORMER BELGIAN PRME MINISTER JEAN-LUC DEHANE SAYING:

‘A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION WOULD INCORPORATE, REINFORCE, LINK AND BUILD ON EXISTING NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT INSTRUMENTS INCLUDING THE NPT, THE CTBT AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY.’

FINALLY, IN 2006 THE SUMMIT OF NOBEL PEACE LAURATES RELEASED A STATEMENT SAYING THAT:

‘THE FAILURE TO ADDRESS THE NUCLEAR THREAT AND TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING TREATY OBLIGATIONS TO WORK FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS ABOLITION SHREDS THE FABRIC OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETY. A WORLD WITH NUCLEAR HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS IS FRAGMENTED AND UNSTABLE, A FACT UNDERSCORED BY THE CURRENT THREATS OF PROLIFERATION. IN SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION FAILS. THUS, NATIONS ARE UNABLE TO ADDRESS EFFECTIVELY THE REAL THREATS OF POVERTY, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE.’

SO, THE NPT 2010 WON’T BE THE PANACEA OF A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT IT MUST BE A SOLID STEPPING STONE TOWARDS THAT WORLD AND WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY.