



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

Media release - for immediate release, 17th May 2010

NFLA Scotland asks new Secretary of State to clarify Trident policy

Nuclear Free Local Authorities Scotland have written to the new Secretary of State for Scotland, Danny Alexander, to clarify what the new Government's policy on the Trident nuclear deterrent and its upgrade is and what implications this has for Scotland.

The letter from the NFLA Scotland Convenor Councillor Euan McLeod notes that the new Minister supported in the election campaign a policy that advocated not spending tens of billions of pounds on a costly replacement of the Trident weapons programme. This reflects the view of the NFLA who want to see a reduction and eventual elimination of the ultimate weapon of mass destruction.

The published agreement of the new coalition UK government only indicates that there will be a review of the Trident programme, but goes into no detail. The letter to Danny Alexander seeks to clarify what this review actually means.

The Trident nuclear weapons programme is situated in Scotland at the Royal Naval Bases in Faslane and Coulport. The UK Government is currently negotiating with other states a review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at the United Nations. The NFLA have linked up with the World Mayors for Peace to advocate support of the Mayor of Hiroshima and Nagasaki's '2020 Vision' for elimination of nuclear weapons by 2020.

Councillor McLeod notes:

"Scotland is the base for the Trident nuclear deterrent at Faslane. The Scottish Parliament has unanimously voted against Trident replacement. Scottish church leaders, NFLA Scotland and a large coalition of citizens groups have echoed the Parliament's view. Scotland does not want to be the base for the UK's independent nuclear deterrent.

With the UK's heavy defence commitments in Afghanistan and across the world, is it not time to spend our limited national defence expenditure on conventional forces only? As local councillors we are very concerned at major public spending cuts and can see little basis in spending billions of pounds on the Trident weapons system."

NFLA Scotland meets next in Livingston, West Lothian on the 18th June with a special seminar on Scottish radioactive waste policy. It is planned to discuss the Minister's response at this meeting to determine how the NFLA will work with other organisations in its campaign against Trident replacement.

Ends

Further information

Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186

Notes to Editors:

(1) NFLA Scotland letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland, sent 14th May:

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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Dear Secretary of State,

TRIDENT NUCLEAR DETERRENT IN SCOTLAND

On behalf of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) Scotland – a cross-party Local Government body which raises legitimate concerns in the areas of nuclear power, radioactive waste management and nuclear weapons proliferation – I would like to congratulate you on becoming Secretary of State for Scotland.

NFLA has taken a long-term interest in seeing the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons for three decades. Members of the NFLA, including myself, met the Foreign Office Minister Ivan Lewis MP in March to discuss UK foreign policy on nuclear weapons and the UK Government's stance for the current Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. We are keen to see the UK Government review the viability, financial costs and moral legitimacy behind maintaining and replacing the UK nuclear deterrent.

We were heartened that the Liberal Democrats pre-election policy on Trident tallied with the NFLA desire to delay its replacement and review its costs base, whilst considering sensible alternatives. However, we are concerned that, in the coalition agreement of the newly elected Government, there does not appear to be any major commitment to now consider the need for Trident or any realistic moves for the reduction and eventual elimination of such weapons. This is extremely disappointing to many Councillors in Scotland, and indeed the United Kingdom.

Scotland is the base for the Trident nuclear deterrent at Faslane. The Scottish Parliament has unanimously voted against Trident replacement. Scottish church leaders, NFLA Scotland and a large coalition of citizens groups have echoed the Parliament's view. Scotland does not want to be the base for the UK's independent nuclear deterrent.

As Secretary of State for Scotland I would appreciate if you could clarify what is the new Government's position on Trident replacement and what role you will play in seeing the reduction of Trident submarines and nuclear weapons convoys in Scotland. We would also like to see you openly consider supporting the World Mayors for Peace's (led by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) '2020 Vision' – fully supported by the NFLA - for the eventual elimination of the ultimate weapons of mass destruction.

With the UK's heavy defence commitments in Afghanistan and across the world, is it not time to spend our limited national defence expenditure on conventional forces only? As local councillors we are very concerned at major public spending cuts and can see little basis in spending billions of pounds on the Trident weapons system.

I look forward to receiving your views on this matter and would be delighted to meet with you on behalf of our members in Local Government.

Yours sincerely,
Councillor Euan McLeod
Convener of NFLA Scotland

CC: NFLA Councillors and Officer Contacts

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