

# Cross-Party Group on Nuclear Disarmament

20 February 2024 at 1.00p.m.

Minute

Present

MSPs

Bill Kidd, Ruth Maguire, Ross Greer

Invited guests

Ann Frisch, Chair of WE Rotary World and Professor Emerita, University of Wisconsin Oskosh, United States

Non-MSP Group Members

Janet Fenton (Secretary) Aine Beattie (SWILPF) Lucy Harrow (UN House/ICAN) Mel Scott (CAAT) Lynn Jamieson (SCND) Margaret Ferguson Burns (Secure Scotland/TP) Gari Donn (UNA) Doyim Agumbiade (nigerian visitor at UNHS) Fiona McOwan (WILPF/GreenCND)

## Agenda item 1

Welcome and Introductions (Bill Kiss)

Bill welcomed and introduced guest Ann Frisch, Chair of WE Rotary World, and Professor Emerita, University of Wisconsin Oskosh, United States

He commented on the previous evening's meeting with Ann and other senior figures in Scottish Rosary which was hosted by Secure Scotland from the ICAN Scottish Round Table at the Words and Actions base in Edinburgh,

Ann Frisch had spoken there on behalf of WE Rotary WORLD, one of 46,000 Rotary Clubs in the world, 200 of them in Scotland with 4300 members.

## Agenda item 2

## Rotary and the TPNW (Ann Frisch)

- Rotary members are business and professional people who have worked together for good, for instance on the elimination of polio.
- They have recently undertaken building a sustainable world.
- WE Rotary WORLD is an international Rotary Club based in Hawai'i, whose mission is nuclear weapons abolition and support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ann is from Minnesota United States and of Scottish descent. WE is part of broader coalition of Rotarians who are working toward saving our planet by disarming and dismantling nuclear weapons.
- Rotary has Clubs in many countries, including every nuclear weapons country except North Korea, and works across borders. She noted that it may be possible that the UK nuclear weapons could target Moscow and kill millions of people, raising a question about the nature of the job of submariners at Faslane and also in Russia.
- Ann posited several terrifying scenarios that could arise from deliberate action or misinterpretation of data, concluding that the only sensible reaction would be to stop before soot rising into the atmosphere blocked sunlight for decades, and the Earth's temperatures dropped to below the point of growing crops inducing a global famine. She pointed out that the failure of the nuclear nations, UK included, to disarm was an important factor leading to the world creating the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).
- The 70 member nations, having removed from their national law every complicity with nuclear weapons, manufacturing, production, landing strips, sharing, hosting, investing, are working to create a nuclear weapons free world. Those states are addressing the impact on test and weapons survivors and are committed to providing funds for research and environmental remediation.
- Ann is engaging with Scottish Rotarians to understand that the nuclear base at Faslane both puts us under threat of attack and makes us complicit in the UK launching a nuclear war and is actively seeking their support for the TPNW. The focus will be determined by Rotarians here in Scotland. They can work with ICAN Partners groups like Secure Scotland and Scottish CND, but are likely to focus on educating themselves about nuclear weapons and how they can be removed and dismantled.

## Agenda item 3

## Reporting A War Crime (Margaret Ferguson Burns and Janet Fenton)

While ordering a ceasefire was beyond its competent remit, in January the UN's International Court of Justice ruled that "Israel must take measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to the members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza strip." Trident Ploughshares has a history of reporting as war crimes activities identified as breaches of International Humanitarian Law in relation to nuclear weapons. Israel is a nuclear armed state. Trident Ploughshares agree on this as an appropriate way to respond to the ICJ ruling and actively encourages others to do the same.

Members of Trident Ploughshares, wherever they are based in the United Kingdom, have been guided to use the Metropolitan Police's *Single Online Home reporting service* as the sole means of reporting a War Crime – in this instance a Breach of the Peace by the United Kingdom Government in aiding and abetting Israel to commit genocide.

Trident Ploughshares understands that Police Scotland are accountable to the Scottish Government and people that if a report like this is made to Police Scotland, it should be brought to the attention of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament could also seek the Scottish Governments view.

In response to a verbal report to Police Scotland at the beginning of the month, the response was a text message saying that Police Scotland will not take any further action.

There is no guidance for submitting a report on the Police Scotland website beyond phoning 101. To report a war crime enquirers are directed to the War Crimes Team at the MET, and so far their strongest response has been that they

"need to satisfy the key criteria that there is a British nexus. If we are unable to identify a UK nexus and UK based suspect, we are not able to launch an investigation here in the UK. However I can reassure you that we do provide any relevant information and evidence to the International Criminal Court who have an open investigation into the Palestine situation."

Trident Ploughshares are encouraging others also to make such a report - to show our despair at the actions of the United Kingdom Government in this matter, and the urgency required to bring about a ceasefire and an end to the atrocities being meted out against the civilian population in Gaza.

The Scottish Government should be aware that planes are routinely taking off to Cyprus carrying a UK-mandated cargo of weapons to be utilised in the attacks on Gaza. More detail is available from Declassified and CAAT. A letter was sent to the Justice Minister in regard to this as a complaint but so far there has been no reply.

The group agreed that we should encourage others to add their own complaints about this war crime perpetrated by Israel and the UK Government's part in it, and ask Scotland to ensure that our Government and Parliament are not compromised in them. If others submit reports TP would welcome sight of these to share and compare responses.

[https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/war-crimes/af/report-a-war-crime/mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New Roman";mso-fareast-language:EN-GB">](https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/war-crimes/af/report-a-war-crime/mso-fareast-font-family:)

## Agenda item 4

Parliamentary involvement in arms trading ( Lynn Jamieson, Scottish CND and Mel Scott CAAT)

- From 6 - 8 pm on Wednesday, 21st, companies involved in manufacturing weapons that are being utilised against Gaza and Yemen will attend a reception in the Scottish Parliament - including Thales, Leonardo, BAE Systems, Raytheon and ADSas an umbrella group.
- Paul Sweeney, Labour MSP, initially organised this event but has since withdrawn his invitation. He expected the event to be cancelled, but Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative MSP, has taken over hosting this event.
- Bill noted that he had not been aware of this due to the nature of Parliament, as there are a lot of events taking place in Parliament, and unless you are invited, you wouldn't know.
- Campaign Against the Arms Trade and others were very disturbed by this development and questioned whether Parliament would object to it. Multiple peace groups are now aware of the occasion and plan to demonstrate outside from 5.30 pm onwards. This relates to wider concerns of support for the arms trade through Scottish business.
- Bill noted that we could contact Labour MSPs who are members of the CPG and let them know about the event and see what they could do.
- Gari noted that the Child Poverty Round Table is happening at the same time and that, as we face the immense magnitude of public poverty and private wealth, we could report there on views from the ND CPG to connect and address these inequalities and inconsistencies and raise Scottish commitment to just transitions.
- Chris noted that attendance at this event is ultimately an individual MSP's responsibility and judgement but that the Presiding Officer is ultimately responsible for the reputation and standing of the Parliament. He has, in the past, been approached for contentious events. The tight timescale does not necessarily mean that nothing can be done, and even so, this could lead to a precedent ruling, and lead to the facilitation of future events being reportable.
- On Thursday 22nd, at 12.45 pm after FMQs, a strong statement from Ivan McKee regarding Gaza will be made on the Chamber floor, showing how Parliamentary business can raise issues in the public domain.
- Bill noted that the First Minister had called for an immediate ceasefire.

- Janet noted that looking at the present collective network, there was a wide reach via our mailing lists, and that we should make our members aware of the Thursday McKee motion and other ways that we can support Parliamentarians in opposing arms dealing and supporting the First Minister's position.

## Agenda item 5

### Reporting on the TPNW Second Meeting of State Parties (Ann, Aine, Lynn, Janet)

- Ann found attending 2MSP very positive experience and commented on the considerable civil society participation. 18 Rotarians from across the world had attended. She discussed the TPNW's commitment to incorporating a scientific perspective and affected communities' perspectives. She noted that a world free of nuclear weapons is already in the making. She is very optimistic encouraging of others to be so as well.
- Aine commented on the feminist peace perspective. The TPNW is intrinsically gendered in its approach and recognises that while women are disproportionately impacted they are agents of change and not victims. This also applies to indigenous people and their communities
- Gari shared that 2MSP was a learning and invigorating (if tiring!) experience and confirmed the view that we have to do everything possible to ensure continued pressure on the nuclear armed states including the UK Governments. She introduced the new Nigerian UN House intern who has a Ph.D. in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Cote d'Ivoire and noted that there are many Nigerian Rotary members.
- Lynn stated that the work of the Scientific Advisory Group has been exemplary, and means that we are building a new evidence base which will encourage new funding and new scholars, and will hopefully be increasingly internationally respected, and increase the basis of understanding of the impact of nuclear weapons on individuals, the environment, and the climate.
- Janet urged ICAN Partners and Parliamentarians to resist the UK Government's pretence that the TPNW will not make progress without the nuclear armed states being members. Huge progress on SAG work on verification and time lines as well as work on Articles 6 and 7 on remediation has already taken place. The norm is shifting and the gendered aspect is now much more clearly articulated and we must all

