

# Nuclear Weapons Policy Liaison Group

## Parliamentary Monitoring

5<sup>th</sup> January 2015 – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015

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This monitoring paper has been compiled by the Nuclear Weapons Policy Liaison Group, a collection of individuals who exchange information and partake in activities in order to work towards influencing the UK government to take a decision to pursue a non-nuclear defence strategy and take concrete steps down the disarmament ladder as a positive contribution to working towards a nuclear weapon free world. The views expressed in this paper are attributed wherever possible and are not necessarily of the Nuclear Weapons Policy Liaison Group.

### 1. Political news



Varinder Bola

With only one hundred days to go until one of the closest general elections in a generation, the mood in parliament is starting to change as the political parties start to harden their positions.

Speaking to activists in Salford earlier this month, Ed Miliband

[hinted at looking at cheaper Trident replacement](#). Whilst Ed's personal views on trident have remained ambiguous, there has been no change in policy by his frontbench team. During a recent opposition day debate on Trident arranged by the SNP and Plaid Cymru, Vernon Coaker Labour's spokesperson on defence, spoke in support of Trident emphasising the party's support for 'Continuous-At-Sea-Deterrence'.

The SNP's leader, Nicola Sturgeon spoke on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show, claiming that she could persuade Ed Miliband to bow to her wishes despite there being no prospect of the SNP holding the balance of power in a vote on Trident. Jim Murphy, the Scottish Labour leader, accused her of "horse-trading" Britain's national security so she could play "footsie about possible coalitions" with his party. Lord John Hutton, Labour's former Secretary of State for Defence, also took to Newsnight saying that [Trident must remain a 'red line' for Labour](#).

Outside of Parliament, [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament activists demonstrated outside the Ministry of Defence](#) building calling on the government to "wrap up" the trident nuclear missiles programme. In response to a rant on Trident, [John Woodcock MP challenged Comedian Russell Brand](#) visit the Barrow shipyard – which is currently building the Astute class attack submarines – to explain his position to the workforce.

The Government has confirmed that in early February 2015, the UK will host the sixth Conference of P5 Nuclear Weapon States. There will be a statement in parliament following this meeting.

A ministerial statement has also confirmed that the Government has now achieved its commitment to reducing the number of operationally available warheads to no more than 120 and met its commitment to implement changes across the SSBN fleet. All Vanguard Class SSBNs on continuous at-sea deterrent patrol now carry 40 nuclear warheads and no more than eight operational missiles (details provided below).

### 2. Early Day Motions

#### EDM 659 - Austrian Government Nuclear Disarmament Initiative

Date tabled: 05.01.2015  
Primary sponsor: Ruddock, Joan  
Sponsors: Harvey, Nick; Robertson, Angus; Ritchie, Margaret; Lucas, Caroline; Bottomley, Peter;

"That this House congratulates the Austrian government on its call to all states to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and its pledge to co-operate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal; notes that this pledge was made at the end of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Vienna on 8-9 December 2014 and attended by 157 states including the UK; applauds the contribution of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent to the conference and the participation of civil society led by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons; agrees that no national or international response capacity exists that would adequately respond to the human suffering and humanitarian harm that would result from a nuclear weapon explosion in a populated area; supports the states led by Austria now calling for work to begin on crafting a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons; and urges the UK Government to participate fully in this new and multilateral initiative."

[View EDM 659 online](#)

### 3. Parliamentary Debates

#### Opposition Day Debate – Trident (20.01.15)

MPs debated the renewal of Trident in the House of Commons on Tuesday 20 January 2015. The subject of this debate was chosen by Plaid Cymru and The Scottish National Party.

The debate was moved by Shadow SNP Spokesperson for Defence, Angus Robertson. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Philip Dunne, responded on behalf of the Government.

MPs debated the following motion, tabled in the names of Angus Robertson, Caroline Lucas, Elfyn Llwyd, Stewart Hosie, Hywel Williams and Pete Wishart:

*'That this House believes that Trident should not be renewed.'*

The motion was negated on division. (Division No. 133, Ayes 37 votes, Noes 364 votes).

For further information see the [parliamentary business pages](#). [Read the full debate online](#).

#### 4. Parliamentary Questions and Answers, and statements

This section shows written answers and statements provided between 5 and 26 January 2015. For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

##### Foreign and Commonwealth Office - North Korea

Foreign and Commonwealth Office - North Korea [\[221224\]](#)

Mr Nigel Evans (19.01.2014): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of North Korea's nuclear activities.

Mr Tobias Ellwood (22.01.2015): We keep the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear and ballistic missile programmes under constant review. We are concerned that the DPRK has restarted its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, coupled with reports that a nearby uranium enrichment facility has been expanded. DPRK threats to conduct a fourth nuclear test are extremely worrying and only serve to destabilise regional security further. We continue to urge the DPRK to comply with its obligations under relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, to refrain from any further provocations, to abide by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to permit full access by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office – North Korea [\[220567\]](#)

Mr Nigel Dodds (13.01.2015): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what

recent discussions the Government has had with the South Korean authorities about (a) North Korean progress towards viable nuclear weapons and (b) protecting UK companies from North Korean hacking.

Mr Hugo Swire (20.01.2015): The UK and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are close partners and regularly discuss matters relating to the Korean Peninsula, as well as broader international security concerns. The most recent Ministerial discussions were on 3 December 2014, when the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), held strategic talks with the ROK Foreign Minister, Yun Byung-se. These talks covered a range of issues including international security. The Foreign Secretary made clear during these discussions our concern that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to advance its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. Separately, the ROK is one of a range of international partners with which we have engaged to help protect the UK and British businesses from cyber attacks. The Government is also working closely with industry to address the threat and impact of cyber attacks, as part of the UK Cyber Security Strategy.

##### Ministry of Defence - Nuclear Weapons

Ministry of Defence – Nuclear Weapons [\[221407\]](#)

Angus Robertson (20.01.2015): To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will place in the Library the most recent version of the Defence Nuclear Executive Board's Risk Register for the Nuclear Programme.

Mr Philip Dunne (26.01.2015): This information is being withheld for the purpose of safeguarding national security.

##### Ministry of Defence - Submarines

Ministry of Defence – Submarines [\[221307\]](#)

Dan Jarvis (20.01.2015): To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy have sufficient submarine detection capabilities.

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Anna Soubry (23.01.2015): The UK Armed Forces have an internationally highly regarded and multi-layered submarine detection capability, primarily delivered through a combination of surface ships, submarines and anti-submarine helicopters, alongside close co-ordination and co-operation with our allies. As the global environment and threat capabilities constantly evolve, we continue to develop new detection capabilities in order to maintain our operational advantage.

These capabilities are subject to regular audit and analysis. The Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 will afford us the opportunity to review the full spectrum of submarine detection capability, including fixed wing Maritime Patrol Aircraft utility.

I am withholding further details of our capabilities and programmes as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

### Ministry of Defence – Nuclear Submarines

Ministry of Defence - Nuclear Submarines [[220094](#)]

Paul Flynn (07.01.2015): To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support was provided for travel and overnight accommodation for stakeholders invited to the two national workshops held in January 2015 in Birmingham and Glasgow as part of the public consultation on an interim submarine nuclear reactor pressure vessel storage site; what the total cost to the public purse was of those workshops; and what fee was paid to the consultancy Instinctif for organising those workshops.

Mr Philip Dunne (14.01.2015): For the national events held in Birmingham and Glasgow, travel and subsistence expenses totalling £1,240 are expected to be paid to attendees. Those receiving expenses are individuals or groups with specialist knowledge or a particular interest in the project, including members of the Submarine Dismantling Project Advisory Group.

The approximate total cost of the Birmingham event was £23,020 and the Glasgow event was £25,670. This included the cost of venue hire; catering; staff and stakeholder travel and subsistence; and a fee of £12,950 per event to organisers Instinctif.

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Nuclear Weapons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Nuclear Weapons [[220923](#)]

Dame Joan Ruddock (15.01.2015): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the P5 nuclear weapon states will next meet in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood (20.01.2015): The UK will host the sixth Conference of P5 Nuclear Weapon States in London on 4-5 February; I will update the House after the meeting.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Nuclear Weapons [[220924](#)]

Dame Joan Ruddock : To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether there will be a joint P5 statement on the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr Tobias Ellwood (20.01.2015): The UK attended the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and made a statement afterwards. Not all the P5 Nuclear Weapons States attended; there are therefore no plans for a joint P5 statement on the Vienna Conference.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office - Nuclear Weapons [[907116](#)]

Dame Joan Ruddock (14.01.2015): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take in response to the conclusions of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in December 2014.

Mr Tobias Ellwood (20.01.2015): The UK was represented at the Vienna conference by our Permanent Representative to the International Organisations in Vienna, Susan le Jeune. As the Vienna Conference was a discussion platform there were no formal follow up outcomes agreed. However as stated at the Conference, the UK will continue to follow the step-by-step approach to disarmament through the existing UN disarmament machinery and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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### Ministry of Defence - Nuclear Submarines: Decommissioning

Ministry of Defence - Nuclear Submarines: Decommissioning [[220664](#)]

Thomas Docherty (13.01.2015): To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Written Statement of 13 January 2015, HCWS183, by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, on Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, whether he expects any changes to the programme for the Submarine Dismantling Project as a result of changes announced to NDA Management at Sellafield.

Mr Philip Dunne(16.01.2015): There will be no changes to the programme of the Submarine Dismantling Project (SDP) as a result of changes announced to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's management at Sellafield.

The assessment of each shortlisted site for the interim storage of Intermediate Level radioactive Waste arising from the SDP will take account of the site operator's ability to meet and deliver the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) requirement. The site assessment work is at an early stage; no decision has been made as to the final interim storage location.

The MOD will continue to work closely with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority on the SDP.

### Ministry of Defence - Antisubmarine Warfare

Ministry of Defence - Antisubmarine Warfare [[HL3670](#)]

Lord Empey (11.01.2015): To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they consider that the United Kingdom's anti-submarine detection capability is adequate to meet current threat levels.

Lord Astor of Hever (18.01.2015): We have acknowledged that we have a maritime surveillance capability gap following the decision not to bring the Nimrod MRA4 into service. However we have also made it clear that it is one that we have chosen to accept and to mitigate through employment of other assets, as well as through cooperation with allies, who have deployed Maritime Patrol Aircraft on several occasions.

A decision on whether to take further steps to mitigate the gap is planned as part of the next Strategic Defence and Security Review.

### Ministry of Defence - Nuclear Deterrent

Ministry of Defence - Nuclear Deterrent [[HCWS210](#)]

Michael Fallon (20.01.2015): As part of his statement on the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) on 19 October 2010, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that we had reviewed our nuclear deterrence requirements. He concluded that we could deliver a credible nuclear deterrent with a smaller nuclear weapons capability and would incorporate these reductions into the current deployed capability and the future successor deterrent programme. The number of deployed warheads on each submarine would be reduced from 48 to 40; the number of operational missiles in the VANGUARD-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) would be reduced to no more than eight; and we would reduce the number of operationally available warheads from fewer than 160 to no more than 120.

The then Secretary of State for Defence, my right hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset (Liam Fox), announced to the House on 29 June 2011 that the programme for implementing the 2010 SDSR warhead reductions had commenced.

I am pleased to inform the House that this Government has now met its commitment to implement these changes across the SSBN fleet. All Vanguard Class SSBNs on continuous at-sea deterrent patrol now carry 40 nuclear warheads and no more than eight operational missiles. We have therefore achieved our commitment to reduce the number of operationally available warheads to no more than 120.

The nuclear deterrent remains to serve as the ultimate means to deter the most extreme threats. The Government continues to plan to renew the UK's independent strategic nuclear deterrent, though the Liberal Democrats will continue to make the case for alternatives. A "Main Gate" investment decision will be required in 2016 to replace the four Vanguard Class SSBNs currently in service. At the same time, as a responsible nuclear weapon state and party to the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the UK remains committed to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.



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The completion of these reductions is a key milestone, demonstrating the UK's continued leadership within the NPT.

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### 5. Press releases

#### Plaid Cymru

- 19/01/2015 [Labour must turn up to vote on trident](#)
- 18/01/2015 [Plaid commons debate seeks to call time on trident](#)

#### Scottish National Party

- 25/01/2015 [Trident saving would benefit health and education](#)
  - 20/01/2015 [Scottish Labour vote with Tories to renew Trident](#)
  - 20/01/2015 [Majority support for SNP's anti-Trident call](#)
  - 19/01/2015 [Labour snub trident debate whilst backing austerity](#)
  - 18/01/2015 [Trident renewal must be cancelled - SNP debate](#)
  - 17/01/2015 [SNP CND condemn moral disgrace of Trident](#)
  - 12/01/2015 [SNP condemn 'unacceptable' risk of nuclear convoy](#)
- .....

### 6. Political blogs

- John Woodcock MP: [John challenges Russell to Trident debate](#)
- John Woodcock MP: [Nationalist posturing over trident gets us nowhere](#)
- Luke Akehurst: [The choice is not between decent hospitals and a properly defended country](#)

Margaret Beckett MP: [The case for Nuclear 'Global Zero'](#)

Paul Ingram: [Election 2015: finally, our chance to ditch Trident](#)

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### 7. Upcoming business

**Note:** The UK will host the sixth Conference of P5 Nuclear Weapon States in London on 4-5 February

#### Recess Dates

##### ■ House of Commons

February  
Feb 12 – 23 Feb 2015

##### ■ House of Lords

February  
Feb 12 – 23 Feb 2015

Parliament will be dissolved on Monday 30 March 2015.

#### Contact

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