



Please reply to: Bronwen Currie
GM Administrator
Taigh na Torraig
Conisby, Bruichladdich
Isle of Islay PA49 7UN
01496 850006
email: ScotFriends@gmail.com

19 September 2013

Dear,

Quaker opposition to the renewal of Trident nuclear weapons

I write to you on behalf of Quakers in Scotland. As part of our ongoing peace testimony Quakers have a long-held belief that Britain's possession of nuclear weapons is untenable because their use is unconscionable: they have the potential to kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people and to cause environmental catastrophe.

While Britain's current nuclear 'deterrent' will remain operational until 2028, the decision about replacing Trident must be made by 2016. Therefore, it is now that the country has the opportunity to take a historic decision to reduce our reliance on these weapons, which no one in their right mind wishes to see used. Although the decision will not be taken in this current Parliament, we believe that it is wasteful and immoral to spend £4 billion on the procurement of 'long lead' items before the Final Gate decision in 2016. A majority of the population of Scotland oppose the renewal of Trident with its high costs, especially at this time of austerity, when the funds could be freed for peaceful purposes that would enhance the lives of us all.

Quakers assert that genuine security comes not from deterrence but from the recognition of the inherent worth of every person in a society free from the threat of violence, where human needs are met. Nuclear 'deterrents' encourage proliferation. Following the logic of 'deterrence', every nation should acquire nuclear weapons. As Mohamed El Baradei, former Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, stressed at the NPT Review Conference in 2005: "As long as some countries place strategic reliance on nuclear weapons as a deterrent, other countries will emulate them. We cannot delude ourselves into thinking otherwise."

We believe that Trident replacement is incompatible with our Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments, as it would run against the spirit, if not the letter, of the UK's obligation under the NPT to work towards total disarmament. Many people consider disarmament possible only in a multilateral context, prompted by unilateral gestures of cautious goodwill. By choosing not to replace Trident, the UK could play a leading role in furthering nuclear disarmament worldwide. We urge you to give this opportunity your support, and hope and pray that you will.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Waterston". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Robin" and last name "Waterston" clearly legible.

Clerk, General Meeting for Scotland

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) General Meeting for Scotland is the body that represents Quakers in Scotland.