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To...

Cc...

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Subject: Possible delay over Trident Replacement

Attachments:

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FROM Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

POSSIBLE DELAY OVER TRIDENT REPLACEMENT

It appears that a crucial decision to progress work on Trident Replacement has been delayed until after the election. A report from the Defence Board at the Ministry of Defence suggests that the Initial Gate decision, which was due to be made in September 2009, has been postponed until July 2010.

A summary of the Defence Board meeting on 26 November says:

"The Board also took stock of progress on the successor submarine programme, and the challenges that remain before it could be initially considered by the Investment Approvals Board next July."

This revelation goes beyond what the Defence Minister, Bob Ainsworth, has told MPs. When questioned on this timetable an MoD spokesperson said that the Defence Board report was based on a draft minute of the meeting which "did not fully describe the situation" and that the minute would be amended.

Bob Ainsworth is due to answer both oral and written questions on this in the House of Commons tomorrow (Monday).

If correct the delay would be welcomed by Scottish CND. Proceeding with Trident Replacement only weeks before the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty review conference, in New York in May, could undermine these crucial negotiations.

Scottish CND chair, Alan Mackinnon, said:

"This is one of the first decisions a new Government will have to make after the election. Every candidate who seeking to become an MP should make it clear to the electorate whether they are going to cut Trident or cut vital public services."

A background paper from Scottish CND is available at:

<http://banthebomb.org/ne/images/stories/pdfs/initial%20gate%20delay.pdf>

The Defence Board report was obtained by Rob Edwards for the Sunday Herald 10 January:

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/transport-environment/replacement-for-trident-nukes-delayed-indefinitely-1.997380>

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