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and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Nicola Sturgeon MSP



The Scottish
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LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
SCOTLAND

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Dear Ian

Following my letter to you of 16 December 2012, I am writing to you to set out the Scottish Government's position regarding the future of Trident nuclear weapons in an independent Scotland.

As a nation, Scotland has consistently shown itself to be opposed to the possession, threat and use of nuclear weapons - a position taken by a majority of Parliamentarians, churches, trade unions and many voluntary organisations, as well as articulated by the Scottish people in opinion polls. Independence is the only constitutional option which gives Scotland the powers to have Trident removed from Scottish waters. It is therefore our position that following a 'yes' vote in the referendum, securing agreement with the UK Government on the terms of Trident's removal would be both a major and an early element in Scotland's transition towards independence.

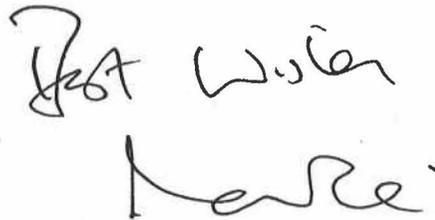
Regarding timescales, Scottish Ministers are firmly committed to securing the earliest safe withdrawal of nuclear warheads from Scotland and, with the historic signing of the Edinburgh Agreement, both the Scottish and UK Governments have agreed to work constructively to recognise the democratic will of the Scottish people. Therefore, following a 'yes' vote in the referendum, it would be the responsibility of the Scottish and UK Governments to continue to work together, in good faith and on a basis of mutual respect, to agree the arrangements for the safe and the timely withdrawal of the Trident nuclear weapons system from an independent Scotland.

Scottish Ministers are also committed to the retention and diversification of HMNB Clyde as a conventional naval base. It is our clear position that the release of Scotland's negotiated share of defence personnel and assets, together with the reallocation of our share of Trident running and replacement costs, would provide significantly more public sector jobs in Scotland than the presence of Trident currently supports.

More generally, - although this would be a matter for the UK Government - we also believe that there is a very strong case for the UK Government to re-examine its commitment to maintaining a continuous-at-sea nuclear deterrent. Noting the views of experts and former military leaders that there is no short or medium term threat to the UK which justifies its huge cost, Trident is completely out of touch with both the defence and the economic challenges that the UK faces. Furthermore, the Scottish Government is as you are aware firmly committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and, whatever the outcome of the referendum, we urge the UK Government to use the opportunity that the current debate on Scotland's future provides, to reassess their stance on nuclear weapons and to explore with allies and others the positive opportunities that Trident withdrawal would provide for further reducing the UK's and the world's nuclear weapons stockpile.

In conclusion, Scottish Ministers would welcome discussions with the UK Government on these and on other areas affected by independence. However, UK Ministers have made clear that they will not discuss the future of Trident prior to the outcome of the referendum. The Scottish Government will however provide further information on these and on other areas affected by constitutional change in advance of the referendum, to ensure that the people of Scotland can make an informed decision on Scotland's future. This will include the publication of a White Paper on Independence in November 2013.

I look forward to further, constructive debate on Scottish independence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Sturgeon', written in a cursive style.

NICOLA STURGEON