

United Nations Association

Westminster Branch

Campaigning for a strong, credible and effective UN



Former Royal Navy Commander urges UK to lead world away from nuclear abyss



In a wide-ranging review, Commander Robert Green RN Ret'd explained why he became one of very few ex-Commanders with nuclear weapon experience to come out against them. Then he reminded us of the nuclear arsenals still held by nine states, and the associated threats to security from their determination to modernise them; and he highlighted the fact that, over 25 years after the end of the Cold War, the US and Russia each still keep about 1,000 strategic warheads on high alert.

After summarising his arguments supporting his conclusion that nuclear deterrence is a huge hoax first devised by the US military-industrial complex to perpetuate its vested interest in producing nuclear weapons and delivery systems, Cdr Green outlined why he feels some optimism for the future. Examples included a groundbreaking conference in Oslo in March, where 127 government delegations heard the President of the ICRC declare that, because no capability exists to help survivors of even a single nuclear weapon detonation, "prevention - including development of a legally binding treaty to prohibit and eliminate such weapons - is the only way forward." Green also made a compelling case for the UK to lead the world away from the nuclear abyss by not replacing Trident, drawing an analogy with British leadership in the struggle to abolish slavery.

Commander Robert Green served for twenty years in the British Royal Navy from 1962-82. As a bombardier-navigator, he flew in Buccaneer nuclear strike aircraft and anti-submarine helicopters. On promotion to Commander in 1978, he worked in the Ministry of Defence before his final appointment as Staff Officer (Intelligence) to the Commander-in-Chief Fleet during the Falklands War.

Commander Green chaired the UK affiliate of the World Court Project (1991-2004), an international citizen campaign which led to the International Court of Justice judgment in 1996 that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be illegal. From 1998-2002 he was Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee of the Middle Powers Initiative.

Now Co-Director with his wife, Dr Kate Dewes ONZM, of the Disarmament & Security Centre in New Zealand, he is the author of *The Naked Nuclear Emperor: Debunking Nuclear Deterrence*, and *Fast Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons: The Middle Powers Initiative*. His latest book, *Security Without Nuclear Deterrence*, was published in 2010, and has been translated into Japanese. The foreword to the book is jointly written by General Sir High Beach, Ret'd and Lord Ramsbotham, also a former General.

The meeting held on 2 June was chaired by Lord Richard of Ammanford. After the meeting, UNA Youth held its Annual General Meeting.