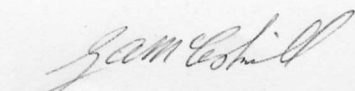


I refer to your communication of 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 and would answer as follows:-

- You say that you believe nuclear weapons have no place in the modern world. This ignores a fundamental reality. Nuclear weapons are located in numerous places in the modern world so whether you believe they have a place or not is completely irrelevant in countries such as Pakistan, Israel and South Africa, all nuclear weapon states.
- You suggest that nuclear weapons do not prevent war. This is correct, nothing prevents war. However, what nuclear weapons have prevented is global conflict between the major powers for more than 60 years.
- You say that nuclear weapons kill indiscriminately. Over the past 60 years, the most indiscriminate killing weapon in the world has been the AK47 assault rifle, the least killing weapon has been nuclear weapons. No one has been killed by a nuclear weapon since the attack on Nagasaki in 1945.
- You suggest that nuclear weapons cost enormous sums of money, this is correct. However, maintaining very large armed forces as a conventional deterrent would be far greater in cost and for far longer. At the same time, the occurrence of armed conflict between the major powers would be substantially increased because they would not be controlled by the Balance of Terror or the Doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction.
- You suggest that the majority of Scots are opposed to nuclear weapons. This flies in the face of every election result since 1950 when pro-nuclear weapon parties have been regularly elected to government. Indeed the only time the Labour Party stood for election on an anti-nuclear weapon stance they were soundly trounced and in fact their election campaign was described as "the longest suicide note in history".
- You inform me that you intend to make the future of Trident a key issue in your choice of whom to vote for in the General Election. That is your choice, a choice you are allowed to make thanks to the protective umbrella of Britain's strategic nuclear deterrent. However, I would refer you to the previous point in that your stance is a guaranteed election loser but please feel free to vote as your conscience dictates.

Thank you for your letter. I look forward to debating the merits of the Trident Missile System with you before an interested audience.

Yours faithfully



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