

Global Scotland – Edition 6 – September 2021

SNP Foreign Affairs and Defence Newsletter

Afghanistan Debacle as MPs Left in the Dark

As the situation deteriorated rapidly in Afghanistan in August and early September, MPs were left in the dark by the UK Government. On the 9th September, SNP MPs still had 153 outstanding cases in regards to Afghanistan, despite assurances from the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary that everyone would have a response by the 6th September.

The deliberate deceit and lack of transparency has become textbook for this Tory government. The SNP have supported calls for an inquiry into what went wrong in Afghanistan, whilst Stewart McDonald MP grilled the Foreign Secretary at the Foreign Affairs Committee over his actions during the crisis.

See more [here](#) and [here](#).

Trident? No thanks!

The Financial Times revealed that the Ministry of Defence has been drawing up plans to remove Trident from Scotland in the event of independence. It marks a steep change from 2014, when the UK refused to even contemplate its removal.

Writing in 'The National' SNP Defence Spokesperson Stewart McDonald MP rejected the suggestion that Faslane could be leased to the UK Government. An independent Scotland would instead be committed to the safe and rapid removal of Trident from Scottish waters.

See more [here](#) and [here](#)

Where's the Assembly?

As part of the Brexit process, a decision was made to establish a Parliamentary Partnership Assembly between the UK and EU Parliaments. Although the EU is ready to proceed with it, there has been no update on the UK side on where things stand.

SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson Alyn Smith MP raised this issue in the Chamber asking for an update on its progress. Stuningly, this was the first time the Assembly has

actually been mentioned in the House of Commons. It continues to make its way between the Lords and the Commons Chambers.

See more [here](#).

SNP Conference Success

The SNP held their first conference this year virtually over the 10th - 13th September. A variety of motions were put forward, including one calling on the UK Government to commit to an environmentally sustainable and accountable international trade policy.

SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson Alyn Smith MP also spoke on the case for independence in Europe, highlighting how Scotland's membership of the EU will put "rocket boosters" on Scotland's Covid recovery.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Brexit Effects on Northern Ireland

SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson Alyn Smith MP and SNP Northern Ireland spokesperson Richard Thomson MP were in Northern Ireland to see how Brexit was affecting the delicate situation. The productive visit included meeting with representatives from all of Northern Ireland's main political parties as well as local business and community leaders.

See more [here](#).

An AUKUS Ruckus

Defence Spokesperson Stewart McDonald criticised the UK going behind the backs of European allies in the new security alliance between Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS). Speaking in the Chamber, he called on the UK Government to pursue a comprehensive defence and security treaty with the European Union and questioned why the UK excluded France from the start

See more [here](#).

SNP Meet With RESCUE UK

Alyn Smith MP and SNP staff met with members of RESCUE UK to discuss a variety of humanitarian and international development issues. The discussion proved informative and insightful, especially given the pressing humanitarian crises around the world and the fallout from the FCDO's decision to cut the international development budget to 0.5% of GNI.

See more [here](#).

Tigray - UK Must Not Abandon Region To Chaos

SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson Alyn Smith MP spoke in a parliamentary debate on the deteriorating situation in Tigray, Ethiopia. The debate was marked by cross-party consensus as well as criticism of the UK Government's decision to cut international aid. Speaking in the debate, Alyn urged the UK to assist in delivering humanitarian aid to Tigray and to halt all arms exports to the region. He also warned of the risk of the conflict spreading to neighbouring areas if left unchecked and the risk of provoking regional instability.

Read more [here](#).

Potential for Afghanistan to Suffer Covid Catastrophe

The humanitarian situation has worsened further in Afghanistan with the Taliban take-over. With the onset of winter, Covid threatens to run riot in a country which has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the world.

Only about 1.2 million doses have been delivered in a country with a population of around 40 million. Since the Taliban took over, vaccination rates have fallen by 80%. Writing in 'The National', SNP Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Alyn Smith MP made the case for increasing international aid and vaccines to the crisis-stricken country.

See more [here](#).