

UKIP Launches “Save our services”

A report by Edward Spalton

CIB is, of course, a non-party organisation but, as I had received an invitation to their press conference I thought I should attend. I wanted to meet Henry Bolton, their new leader, on this first public event since he took office. It is seventeen years since I left UKIP to campaign on a cross-party basis but I met some old friends and was pleased that several people, whom I had not met before, told me they appreciated CIB, mentioning recent articles on the website.

The event was well-attended, briskly and cheerfully organised. The first speaker was Mike Hookem MEP, who included a video presentation of his work amongst veterans who had fallen on hard times and were not receiving the help either from government or local authorities which the Military Covenant says they “should” receive – but do not. Service charities were doing their best to fill the gaps but it was not enough. He called for a Minister and a department, like the American Veterans’ Administration, to be in charge of welfare for former service personnel and to help them back into civilian life. It was no good telling local authorities what they “should” do, it needed to be “must”. He also called for ex service personnel with good records to be given favourable consideration for employment in the police and other public services where their skills and discipline would be an advantage to the community.

Henry Bolton took the podium and ranged further and wider, mentioning the sharp cuts which had been made not only to the armed forces but to the police, reducing our defences against internal terrorism and criminality as well as external hostility, at the very time when they were all increasing. The government had not signed up on Monday 13th November to

integration of British forces with the increasingly unified EU military command under the PESCO agreement, which would suck resources away from NATO. It had signed up to much else and EU absorption still remained a threat.

Whilst British armed forces should be capable of joint operations with our neighbours, they must always retain the ability of independent action – or we were not a sovereign country. Tied in with the developing EU army and trapped in sourcing our military supplies under EU tendering rules, we would not only be unable to act independently in the field but forbidden to maintain the necessary British industrial base for supplying our forces. EU arms suppliers, under political direction, could in effect, choke off any significant operations by British forces of which the EU did not approve – by simply withholding supplies or, for instance, the use of aircraft on which we had an expectation to rely.

I was able to ask Henry Bolton one short question. Did he think that Political Correctness in local authorities, particularly left wing authorities, was pushing the welfare of ex-servicemen and women to the end of the queue? He replied that authorities of all political colours were negligent in this matter.

From what had been said by government, it appeared that the needs of returning Jihadists for housing, “re-education” and employment would take precedence over the welfare of our own ex-service people. This was monstrous. Those known to have been in arms for Jihadism should be charged with adhering to our country’s foes – what used to be called treason, rather than handled with kid gloves for the sake of “community relations”.

I think we will be hearing more of Henry Bolton and many people will like what he has to say.