



TRIDENT AND JOBS

Truth and myths

UNITE'S debate on Trident replacement is likely to be one of the most controversial at this year's policy conference. It is also one of the most important, the outcome of which will influence the all-important debate at Labour Party conference in September. Labour CND urges all delegates: please think carefully before you vote.

The principled case against nuclear weapons is well-established. As Unite Executive Council statement to the 2014 policy conference (ES2: Peace and Disarmament) expressed it:

'The question of Britain's nuclear weapons system is ... first of all a moral issue, and then a strategic one concerning Britain's place in the world and the international environment we wish to see. Such weapons would, if used, constitute a mortal threat to humanity's survival...'

The practical case against Trident is equally strong. It is a mega-expensive project which doesn't protect Britain from the threats we're facing; and neither does it protect jobs.

Real threats facing the UK

In November last year, the government published its Strategic Defence and Security Review, which included an assessment of the most likely threats facing the UK. These were:

- Terrorism
- Cyber-attacks
- Instability in the Middle East and elsewhere
- Pandemics such as the ebola and zika viruses
- Natural disasters like floods and storms
- Activities by transnational criminal gangs such as people trafficking

A seventh longer-term threat was identified from weapons of mass destruction. The government considered this might come from the use of chemical or biological weapons against the UK mainland or British troops abroad.

Nuclear weapons offer no protection against any of these. In today's world the opponents of Trident are the hard-headed realists; the pro-Trident lobby is 30 years behind the times.

If Britain replaces its nuclear weapons system, CND estimates the lifetime cost will be a whopping £205 billion, on current government figures. This would be better spent elsewhere.

Cost of Trident

Manufacturing four successor submarines	£31 billion
Contingency fund	£10 million
Missile life extension programme	£350 million
Replacement warheads	£4 billion
Infrastructure capital costs	£4 billion
In-service costs	£142 billion
Total	£205 billion

Challenging the myths around jobs

Jobs are top of the trade union agenda. We've all heard it argued that Trident replacement protects high-skilled, high-paid jobs. But Trident replacement isn't the job protector it's cracked up to be.

• Myth No 1: Trident generates 30,000 jobs

The MoD argues that the 'UK's defence nuclear enterprise supports over 30,000 jobs across the UK and makes a significant contribution to the economy.' This includes armed services personnel and an estimate of jobs in ancillary industries.

Jobs dependent on Trident

Manufacturing of submarines and components	6,000
Building, maintaining and decommissioning warheads	4,000
Clyde naval base	520
Submarine deep maintenance and decommissioning	1,000
Total:	11,520

These latter two should be taken out of the mix. The government will decide how to redeploy service personnel if the Trident programme is not replaced. Estimates of ancillary jobs should also be set to one side, because new investment in other industrial sectors will generate new ancillary jobs in these areas too.

CND has calculated that approximately 11,520 civilian jobs are directly dependent on Trident. Many of these would continue to be employed on decommissioning work for the foreseeable future.

The government's 2013 update on the successor submarine estimates 6,000 will be employed to work on the new boats – in Barrow, Rosyth Dockyard and the Derby Rolls Royce plant. The warheads are built, maintained and eventually decommissioned by the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Many of the jobs at Aldermaston and Burghfield are secure for a long time even if Trident is not replaced.

- **Myth No 2: Civilian spin-off from Trident**

Since the first UK nuclear weapons were built in the 1950s, billions of pounds have been invested in an industrial and technological network necessary to maintain them. Huge amounts of public money have been spent on warhead research, development and production, on the design and manufacture of submarines, and on the construction of facilities for servicing the nuclear fleet, not to mention day to day operation and decommissioning costs.

To counter criticisms about the high cost of Trident, it is often claimed that military investment has important civilian spin-offs. As long as 20 years ago Nobel prize-winning economist Lawrence Klein argued the opposite: *'The evidence suggests that smaller military spending over time increases investment and consumption and produces an important overall gain for the economy.'*

Many more economists agree with him nowadays. Military needs have become too specialised to be of much use elsewhere.

Defence diversification

Unite's study of defence diversification and the union's ES2 Peace and Disarmament, 2014, recognised: *'the question of diversifying British manufacturing industry away from its over-reliance on defence spending [is] urgent'*.

The money saved by not replacing Trident can be used to finance a massive investment programme that would create many more jobs than the current or any future nuclear weapons systems can provide.

The whole of British industry faces chronic skills shortages which public sector-led investment can address. The skills of the current Trident workforce would form the nuclei of such a large-scale industrial investment programme. The sums involved are vast – whole areas, such as Barrow, could be regenerated.

As part of a coherent industrial strategy, Labour must honour Jeremy Corbyn's pledge to establish a Defence Diversification Agency, in conjunction with the unions. Its role will be to redeploy defence workers, diversify their skills, rebalance the economy, and promote growth not austerity and cuts.


What you can do

The trade union movement has a long history of supporting nuclear disarmament, right back to the 1950s. The 2013 TUC re-affirmed its opposition to Trident replacement in a CWU economic policy motion, supported by Unite, and carried overwhelmingly.

The motion stated: *'Public finances can also be improved by... scrapping the replacement of Trident. Money saved by ending our nuclear weapons system could be used to sustain the process of defence diversification, vital to our manufacturing future.'*

For all our sakes, we urge you to reaffirm that support. Please vote to oppose Trident replacement.

For more information on Trident, including on jobs and diversification, please visit the CND website at www.cnduk.org/information/briefings/trident-briefings.

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