

## Another NATO intervention: Hands off Libya

We are back in the 19th century, conscious of the white man's burden and 'la mission civilisatrice de la France'. We have forgotten that it is the west that has exploited the middle east and has backed dictators as long as they have protected Western interests, especially oil.

So are we bombing Saudi Arabian forces, which are helping to suppress a popular uprising in Bahrain? Of course not. Western morality is selective. Because it is selective it is not moral at all.

We should all welcome the popular uprisings which are not just demanding democracy. They also want to deal with economic oppression. But the western record has been so exploitative its



support will in the long run hamper those it says it will help. Democracy cannot be imposed from the barrel of a gun.

It is bad enough if Gaddafi is killing his own people. We do not help by killing even more by air strikes.

It is disgraceful but this misguided attack has only been opposed by 15 MPs. We must demand that the air strikes should stop. If this is not immediately obtainable Britain should immediately refuse to participate in them. That is the least we can do if we still claim to be a civilised society.

*by Walter Wolfgang*

## Coalition confusion on Trident - but Labour must not oppose from the right

There is growing confusion regarding the coalition's policy on Trident, as the Conservatives and Lib Dems attempt to put different a spin on the replacement process to suit their own perspectives.

The Lib Dems have claimed the delay in the Main Gate decision - authorising the bulk of expenditure on construction of the submarines - until after the next election means Trident won't be replaced 'on their watch'. However the Conservative Defence Secretary Liam Fox has since said the Ministry of Defence will start purchasing various 'long-lead' items, such as the steel necessary to construct the hull of the submarines, before this formal decision point. This would potentially lock any future government into the project.

Furthermore, the Lib Dems Defence Minister has told *The Guardian* that new ideas on nuclear-sharing with the French - perhaps seeking to demonstrate alternative Lib Dem ideas - have been

discussed with French counterparts. There has been no public comment from Liam Fox, but such a proposal including joint patrols, will not be popular amongst Tory die-hards.

Meanwhile there is growing evidence to undermine the UK's claim that its so-called deterrent is 'independent'. Recent information has shown parts of the submarine and the warhead are also being developed in the US. In the existing system, the missiles that carry the warhead are leased from the US, but on the replacement project, Fox has now admitted the MoD is working jointly with US counterparts on a missile compartment (a section of the submarine), the nuclear reactors that would power the submarine, and a published document from the Sandia laboratory showed the US was upgrading the UK's warhead.

Meanwhile Labour has begun its own

defence review. At the 2006 Labour conference, contemporary resolutions opposing Trident replacement were ruled out of order despite the National Policy Forum document stating, 'The question of the replacement for the Trident system is... of central importance... and we have said that there should be a full debate on the issue.' This must not happen again.

But despite the election of Ed Miliband, the shadow defence secretary Jim Murphy remains wedded to the Blairite-era politics of nuclear weapons, aircraft carriers and 'hard power projection' through foreign intervention.

As Murphy carries out a policy review, and Labour looks to a restructuring of policy debate within the party, it is vital that all views from the membership are fully aired and discussed at the National Policy Forum and at the Annual Conference.

# A warning against nuclear power - Fukushima on Chernobyl's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Angela Merkel rightly called Fukushima 'a turning point for the world'. It is. This was no glitch in an unsophisticated backwater of a State that could be explained away by poor design or low operating standards; this happened in one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world with an unsurpassed reputation for detail and precaution and a commitment to a major industry with 55 reactors. Yet still there were still no back-up diesel generators, the boiling-water reactors needed huge amounts of cooling, four of the reactors were built too close together, the cooling ponds containing spent fuel were unwisely built immediately above the reactor cores, and there were dangerously too many fuel rods (over 11,000) bunched together on site. Of course no other country would now make the same mistakes, but if this all happened in top-tech Japan, how can we be sure that there aren't other equally unpredicted (or unpredictable) flaws with similar catastrophic potential at other sites, whether in the UK or anywhere else?

The industry's answer is: 'We're learning the lessons and anyway we're a low carbon technology that is necessary if the UK is to achieve its climate change targets'. Significantly, after Chernobyl and Three Mile Island, the only reason that nuclear emerged from its status as a doomed technology (remember Blair's 'nuclear is back with a vengeance', though in the event not quite in the way he intended) was the arrival of climate change as a major global concern. But is nuclear really necessary for this purpose?

Huhne himself is reported as saying 'We can do the 80% reduction in emissions



by 2050 without new nuclear, but it will require a big effort on carbon capture and storage and renewables'. Is that feasible?

It certainly is. Germany has already installed more wind power capacity than the entire current UK nuclear capacity and is now adding to it at a rate equivalent to more than one new reactor a year. In 2009 alone Germany installed solar photovoltaic systems with capacity equivalent to about 4 nuclear reactors. The 2010 figures are expected to be higher still.

In fact Britain has more renewables capacity than any other EU country, but we are nowhere near fully deploying it - the UK generates only 6% of its electricity from renewable sources of energy, compared with 15-25% in France, Germany and Italy, and 35 -50% in Scandinavia. Last year's Offshore Valuation report showed that the UK has enough offshore wind potential not

only to satisfy all our own electricity needs, but also to become a net electricity exporter.

Blair got a lot of the big decisions wrong - Iraq, nuclear, GM. We need to reverse those decisions: Britain's clean energy future is not nuclear, shale gas (which is increasingly being talked about, to extend the life of fossil fuels) or oil imported from repressive regimes, but a huge development of renewables for which we are ideally placed.

*by Michael Meacher MP  
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## Remember Chernobyl: nuclear power is not the answer

- PUBLIC MEETING -

**Speakers**  
Michael Meacher MP  
Dr Paul Dorfman  
Prof Paul Dilwyn

**Chaired by**  
Caroline Lucas MP

**6pm, Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Grimond Room,**  
**Portcullis House, Parliament**

Email [ben.folley@cnduk.org](mailto:ben.folley@cnduk.org) to  
register your attendance

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