

TRIDENT

**Nuclear disarmament is possible – please write to your MP, suggested letters below
See notes arising from meeting with Nick Ritchie on 23 February 2009**

Dear Andrew Stunell, Mark Hunter

Thank you for signing EDM 660: Parliamentary Scrutiny of Trident Replacement.

Furthermore, a report produced by the National Audit Office raised serious questions concerning the timetable and budget for replacing Trident. The report also identifies major areas of uncertainty in the budget with costs vulnerable to inflation and changes in the exchange rate.

In light of these concerns and in line with the government's commitment to review the programme, it is essential that there is a full debate at the end of the concept phase of the programme (the Initial Gate). In addition to signing the EDM, I would ask you to write to the Secretary of State for Defence and ask that he ensures this is the case.

Dear Ann Coffey,

I am writing to ask you to sign EDM 660: Parliamentary Scrutiny of Trident Replacement.

With the UK facing its biggest economic crisis in decades, there is a stronger case than ever to put the money for Trident (as much as £76 billion over its lifetime) to better use. Nuclear weapons do not meet our security needs and have been described by senior retired military figures as 'useless'.

During the parliamentary debate on Trident in March 2007, the government made a commitment to provide regular reports on the progress of the programme. The first of these reports, known as the Initial Gate, is due in September 2009 during parliamentary recess. This expensive and illegal process must not be subject to behind-the-scenes decision-making and must be revisited urgently. I hope you support the request of the EDM that the Initial Gate decision be delayed until Parliament is in session and can be presented with the report for scrutiny.

As you may be aware, the Foreign Office recently published a policy information paper "Lifting the Nuclear Shadow". Whilst the paper outlines a six-point plan to rid the world of nuclear weapons, the replacement of Trident completely undermines this goal. It is particularly disappointing that the government does not appear to be following the example being set by President Obama in this policy area.

Furthermore, a recent report produced by the National Audit Office raised serious questions concerning the timetable and budget for replacing Trident. The report also identifies major areas of uncertainty in the budget with costs vulnerable to inflation and changes in the exchange rate.

I hope you agree it is necessary for MPs to be allowed a say on this and I therefore urge you to sign EDM 660.

From CND website <http://www.cnduk.org/index.php/get-involved/actions/lobby-your-mp-to-sign-edm-660.html>

Government quotes on Trident - Brown puts Trident cuts on nuclear arms talks table [The Guardian](#), Wednesday 18 March 2009

The UK will begin to scale back its stockpile of nuclear warheads if Russia and the US agree to new reductions, the prime minister said yesterday

Speaking to scientists and diplomats from 37 countries at Lancaster House in London, [Gordon Brown](#) said that as one of the six nations with confirmed nuclear capability the UK had to show the lead by striking "a global bargain". The next international five-yearly proliferation review conference is due next year. Brown said: "Step by step, we have to transform the discussion of nuclear disarmament from one of platitudes to one of hard commitments. "Britain has cut the number of its nuclear warheads by 50% since 1997 ... If it is possible to reduce the number of UK warheads further, Britain will be ready to do so." Though the UK's warheads now number fewer than 160, the government has provoked anger by announcing a £20bn programme to build four new submarines and taking part in an American programme to extend the life of the Trident D5 missile.

Other government quotes on disarmament:

Gordon Brown, '[Speech at the Chamber of Commence in Delhi](#)', January 21, 2008: "I pledge that in the run-up to the Non Proliferation Treaty review conference in 2010 we will be at the forefront of the international campaign to accelerate disarmament amongst possessor states, to prevent proliferation to new states, and to ultimately achieve a world that is free from nuclear weapons."

Des Browne, '[Laying the Foundations for Multilateral Disarmament](#)', addresses to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, February 5, 2008: "The UK is ready to lead the way on this. Research into how one technically verifies the dismantlement of a warhead continues at the UK's Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston. "following on from the AWE research, the UK is willing to host a technical conference of P5 nuclear laboratories on the verification of nuclear disarmament before the next NPT Review Conference in 2010"

A Regime on the Edge?

How Replacing Trident Undermines the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Dr. Nick Ritchie, November 2008

<http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/bdrc/nuclear/trident/briefing4.html>

The government claims its decision to replace the current Trident nuclear weapons system will have no effect on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and wider efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. This assertion is wrong. This briefing paper argues that:

1. The NPT embodies two crucial norms: a norm against nuclear proliferation and a norm of progress towards nuclear disarmament.
2. A strong NPT is vital for British and global security but the strength of the treaty and compliance with its norms is based on its perceived *legitimacy*.

3. The vast majority of states accept that the NPT's legitimacy rests on concrete progress towards both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

4. Support for actions to reinforce the non-proliferation norm are therefore increasingly *dependent* upon progress towards nuclear disarmament by the nuclear powers.

5. Britain's decision to renew Trident *can only* reinforce the value of nuclear weapons, the logic of nuclear deterrence, and the prospect of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear powers.

6. This *can only* weaken the treaty's legitimacy by undermining the norm of progress towards nuclear disarmament with it the legitimacy of efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

7. Arguments that possession of nuclear weapons by Britain and the West is 'good' and their possession by those hostile to or not allied with the West is 'bad' only serves to legitimise the general existence of nuclear weapons and undermine the NPT's legitimacy

The 2010 NPT Review Conference: It is vital that Britain takes a lead in the run up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference to ensure concrete measures are agreed pursuant to nuclear disarmament to bolster the treaty's legitimacy, strength and effectiveness.

This should include measures to delay, scale down or reverse the decision to replace Trident given the absence of any compelling strategic rationales for Britain remaining a nuclear power.

For further information please contact Dr. Ritchie at n.ritchie@bradford.ac.uk.