

Time-line of events and opportunities

- Spring-Summer** Opportunity to raise discussion and put motions to Church Assemblies and Synods
- 13 July** Mass Lobby of Parliament. Arrange to meet your MP. More here <http://bit.ly/1spfWOJ>
- 6 & 9 August** Anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ensure prayers in your church for peace, for communities suffering effects of nuclear war and testing. Why not arrange an information stall/exhibition? Make copies of this Briefing available, together with the Stop Trident petition.
- September** Get together with local churches and peace organisations and arrange a meeting with your MP to raise your concerns about Trident replacement.
- Urge your church / community to become a 'nuclear weapon free' space - making a public statement to local press or putting up a banner saying **'No Faith in Trident'**.



Global Day Against Military Spending, Hebden Bridge 2016



Trident Briefing 2016

Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful co-existence among people and states. The youth of today and tomorrow deserve far more... Spending on nuclear weapons squanders the wealth of nations. Pope Francis, 2014

Threatening to kill millions of innocent people is morally wrong. Hilary Topp, Student Christian Movement

Later this year a decision will be made on the replacement of the British nuclear weapons system known as Trident. The Network of Christian Peace Organisations offers this Briefing for use by individuals, organisations and churches in the lead-up to this decision. We believe this is a matter of faith and spirituality that speaks of how we live together in the world, how we see one another and how we understand security.

Trident consists of four submarines. The nuclear warheads on each submarine contain more destructive power than all the bombs dropped in World War II combined, including those used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Trident cannot protect us from 21st Century challenges such as terrorism, climate change, cyber war or global instability. By claiming to need a so-called nuclear 'deterrent', the UK is inciting other countries to develop their own. A world with nuclear weapons is a much more dangerous place than a world without them.

The UK is committed by international treaties to negotiate 'in good faith' and 'at an early date' the total elimination of its nuclear weapons.

What you can do

Use the arguments and questions overleaf to help you to:

- Write to local and Church press to question plans to replace Trident, perhaps looking at local/regional needs that could be met with the money which would be spent on Trident.
- Engage with your Member of Parliament, setting out in your own words your concerns about the replacement of Trident.
- Join or ask to be put on the mailing list of one of the member organisations of NCPO and keep in touch with peace and disarmament developments and opportunities all year round.

Members of the NCPO

Anglican Pacifist Fellowship
Baptist Peace Fellowship
Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Network
Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Christian International Peace Service
Church and Peace
Community of Reconciliation
Congregational Peace Fellowship
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Franciscan Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation
Martin Luther King Peace Committee
Methodist Peace Fellowship
Northern Friends Peace Board
Pax Christi
Quaker Peace and Social Witness
Student Christian Movement
United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship

Contact: NCPO, c/o Pax Christi,
St Joseph's, Watford Way,
London NW4 4TY, 0208 203 4884

www.ncpo.org.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/ncpouk/>



NCPO members at Stop Trident Rally, 2016 Credit: Pat Gaffney

Resources and websites to help you

The Truth About Trident: Disarming the nuclear argument by Timmon Milne Wallis. Explores the issues around Trident and raises questions about the impact of their use, safety, costs and alternatives. £12.99 Available from the Quaker Bookshop 020 7663 1030/1031 or quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

The Catholic Church and Nuclear Weapons: a leaflet from Pax Christi on moral, legal and humanitarian aspects <http://bit.ly/1MjPSdI>

Background on Trident from CND <http://www.cnduk.org/campaigns/no-to-trident>

Nuclear Flow Chart: an online resource on the morality and ethics of nuclear weapons www.nuclearmorality.com/

What Churches can Do: resource pack from Christian CND <http://bit.ly/1TLy7sn>

Petitions

UK Multi-faith Statement on Nuclear Weapons: you can sign online here <http://bit.ly/1scA1b8>

Stop Trident petition from CND <http://bit.ly/249hXKH> (You can also download paper copies for stalls.)

For more copies of this Briefing contact:

NCPO, c/o Pax Christi, St Joseph's,
Watford Way, London NW4 4TY

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Arguments and questions to engage in discussion and help challenge Trident replacement

Cost

The cost of Trident replacement is massive and continues to rise. The submarines alone were to cost £11-£14 billion in 2006 and now that estimate has risen to £31-£41 billion. The total cost of deploying the submarines, missiles and warheads for an additional 30 years is now estimated to be over £200 billion. This figure includes the cost of eventually decommissioning the submarines and warheads, as well as the ongoing running costs which are expected to rise from the current £2 billion per year to nearly double that amount by the 2060s.

At a time when austerity budgets continue to mean cuts to social services, increasing pressure on the NHS, rising tuition fees, and the draining of local authority resources, spending that much money on Trident reflects our distorted national priorities. With a fraction of the money to be spent on Trident, we could instead be building a world-class health service, re-opening access to higher education, investing in sustainable energy sources to meet our climate commitments, and addressing the real causes of war and terrorism which lie in the inequalities and injustices of the present international order.



? Questions you could raise

How do you justify spending such extraordinary amounts of money on Trident when there are so many other urgent priorities that are not being adequately funded? At what point does the price tag for Trident become too high to justify? As Christians, we want to see our taxes used to meet the real needs of people and not wasted on a white elephant like Trident.

A promise made 'in good faith'

The British government promised in 1968 to negotiate 'in good faith' the complete elimination of its nuclear weapons. It gave an 'unequivocal undertaking' in 2010 that it was still committed to fulfilling this promise. And yet the UK continues year after year to vote against nuclear disarmament initiatives at the UN and has so far refused to put its own nuclear weapons up for negotiation. In 2015, the UK, together with the US and Canada, shamefully blocked the final agreement reached by 185 other countries at the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference, and in 2016 it has been boycotting the UN working group which is meeting specifically to find ways to move forward on multilateral disarmament.

As Christians, we believe we need to be as good as our word. When we make promises to other countries we should stick by them. We cannot be saying one thing and doing the opposite. The UK has moral, as well as legal, obligations that commit it to a world without nuclear weapons. How does the renewal of Trident move us towards such a world?



Liverpool Christians public witness Credit: John Usher

? Questions you could raise

Do you think the UK should be present at multilateral disarmament talks? Do you think the UK should put its Trident weapons up for negotiation as promised in 1968? Do you think it makes sense to renew Trident when the vast majority of other countries are trying to negotiate the total elimination of all nuclear weapons?

Nuclear weapons are tools of terror and contribute nothing to peace. Our country's money and know-how could be so much better used.

Philip Austin,
Northern Friends Peace Board

Security

As Christians, we put our faith in God rather than in weapons. We believe it is an act of faithlessness to claim that our only protection from weapons of mass destruction is to possess weapons of mass destruction ourselves. In what sense does Trident 'protect' us, when all it can do is to inflict death and destruction on another country after they have already inflicted the same on us? When would such a revenge attack ever be morally justified?

We are told that Trident is a 'deterrent' and would never be used. But no weapon can be effective as a deterrent unless there is a clear intention to use it. The longer we rely on these weapons, the greater the likelihood that they will be used by accident or design. It is a gross misreading of history as well as of human nature to suggest that the only reason countries have not attacked us in the last 70 years is because they were 'deterred' by the threat of massive nuclear retaliation.



Ash Wednesday Witness, London 2013

? Questions you could raise

Do you think the vast majority of countries - which do not have their own nuclear weapons and are not 'protected' by the so-called 'nuclear umbrella' - are less safe and in more danger of being attacked than we are? Do you think the UK is more, or less, likely to be a target if we keep Trident? What should Britain do to prevent nuclear proliferation and make the world safer?

Humanitarian impact

Trident is a weapon of mass destruction. A single Trident warhead is more than six times as powerful as the bomb which killed 140,000 people in Hiroshima. Each Trident submarine carries 40 warheads, or more destructive power than was used in the whole of World War II. If these were ever used, even only on military targets in and around Moscow, they would probably kill more than 5 million people. The radioactive fall-out would kill many millions more. Many would be killed even in the UK, since fall-out does not stop at national boundaries - as we saw with the Chernobyl accident.

As Christians, we do not accept that there can ever be circumstances in which it is permissible to commit mass murder or to deliberately target whole cities full of innocent civilians. While most Christians through the centuries have accepted there can be a 'just war' under certain circumstances, these circumstances cannot be applied to nuclear weapons or nuclear war, since these weapons are incapable of distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants, or even between belligerent countries and neutral countries.

I have no faith in Trident because I have no faith in weapons of mass destruction. If we can ban chemical and biological weapons because of their indiscriminate function then I do not want my country to hold nuclear weapons.
Sue Claydon,
Anglican Pacifist Fellowship



Japanese campaigner at Aldermaston
Credit: Pat Gaffney

? Questions you could raise

Do you think *all* weapons of mass destruction should be banned and made illegal, including nuclear as well as biological and chemical weapons? Do you think it can ever be justified to use Trident against civilians, the elderly and the infirm - to deliberately target schools, hospitals, churches, fall-out shelters, museums, homes, public buildings?