



Better off without Trident



Public Services



Employment Opportunities



National Security

The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and United Reformed Church have been outspoken in their opposition to a replacement of the Trident nuclear submarines. Renewal of Trident is incompatible with the UK's desire to encourage global nuclear non-proliferation.

Trident is likely to cost the UK a staggering 3.7 billion per year over the next 15 years. In addition to moral and ethical concerns, there are also serious economic arguments against renewing it. Trident is a large drain on our budget with very little to show for it. **Consequently we would all be better off without Trident.**

We would all be better off without Trident ...

Public Services – Better off without Trident

The combined cost of replacing Trident and maintaining the current system is £3.7 billion per year for the next 15 years (£123 per income tax payer). Caroline Lucas MP described the Trident costs as “an eye watering £100 billion over the next 30 years”. The Ministry of Defence is currently running at a deficit which means that the money that is funding Trident will ultimately draw on Treasury resources which would otherwise be available for other public services. For the amount that Trident costs the UK in a year we could: hire 10,000 more health visitors or 10,000 more teachers, cancel Government freezes to Tax Credits, build 12,500 more council houses, supply solar energy to 345,200 council houses and protect the Sure Start budget from cuts.

Employment opportunities – Better off without Trident

The Trident programme helps employ 6,700 people (costing £550,000 per job) compared to the 10,000 people (£120,000 per job) that are employed in Yeovil making military helicopters. Money spent on Trident could be better used to create more jobs in Scotland and elsewhere. Many of the jobs currently involved in building Trident submarines could be sustained by the continued diversification of shipyards. Although Trident provides some employment in Scotland, the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and the majority of Scottish people insist that they would be better off without Trident and want to see weapons of mass destruction removed from Scottish soil.

National Security – Better off without Trident

Spending on Trident is unpopular with senior Ministry of Defence staff who have seen other capital projects cancelled, whole regiments axed and our Forces personnel under strain due to the intensity of operational deployments. Trident, a system with no military utility, consumes 6% of the Ministry of Defence revenue budget. For less than a third of what we spend on Trident we could purchase 62 Lynx Wildcat helicopters, 2 Queen Elizabeth aircraft carriers, and 9 Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft.

Have we already bought a new Trident system?

There are several stages involved in the commissioning of replacement Trident submarines. At each stage in the process more funding is approved for building the replacement submarines. In May 2011 the Ministry of Defence approved the ‘Initial Gate’ decision and proposed the purchase of ‘long lead’ items that must be purchased well in advance of the build of new submarines. There will be public debate around the general election as the next decision point, ‘Main Gate’, will take place in 2015. The government has already overspent by £2 billion the original £4 billion which they budgeted to be spent before the Main Gate decision. There has not been any parliamentary approval for this additional expenditure, or indeed for the recently announced full system cost of £26 billion, which is remarkable in the light of major public spending cuts.

Russia and the USA have taken a significant step taken towards nuclear disarmament in signing a new START (STrategic Arms Reduction Treaty). They have agreed to reduce by two-thirds the total number of warheads allowed under the previous START treaty agreed in 1991. By contrast, if we were to continue with our current plan to replace Trident we would be locked into nuclear weapons for the next 30 to 40 years. Instead we are calling on the UK to adopt a leadership role in multilateral disarmament processes to enable progress towards a world without nuclear weapons.

For more information on where political parties stand on Trident please visit our website: www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/tridentpartypositions

Cost of Trident for a year

Total Cost:
3,691,726,666



For the same cost as Trident for a year

- **15,000** more health visitors
- **15,000** more teachers
- **300** Sure Start centres protected from cuts
- **12,500** new council houses per year
- Provide solar energy to **345,000** council houses
- Buy **62** Lynx Wildcat helicopters, **2** aircraft carriers, **9** Nimrod aircraft



Total Cost:
£3,677,503,521

A Christian perspective on nuclear weapons in the post-cold war era

At the heart of the Christian faith is the incarnation of Christ through whom we can see God at work in our world. The challenge for Christians is to not only relate the gospel to personal transformation but to understand its implications for our relationships with others and thus peace cannot be detached from the gospel of peace. To a vast majority of our Church members it would seem implausible that nuclear weapons could ever be used in the context of a 'just war'.

From a perspective of Christian ethics, influencing one's adversary through the threat of nuclear weapons is problematic. Deterrence relies on convincing an adversary that there are circumstances in which the UK is capable of using such weapons. A threat of violence is not a non-violent act. Thus we should be concerned about the moral implications of becoming accustomed to violence and the potential exercise of power associated with nuclear weapons.

In 2006, a reflection on war, human security and contemporary Christian ethics led our Churches to oppose the proposed replacement of Trident submarines in this post-cold war era.

What can I do?

Write to your MP at the House of Commons

- Explain to your MP that you believe we will be better off without Trident
- Ask them to ensure that their party does not support expenditure on major components for the new submarines which carry Trident missiles without a public debate.
- Ask your MP not to lock the UK into 30 years of nuclear weapons despite the progress towards disarmament in the new START treaty between the USA and Russia.

Address your letter Dear Mr/Ms [name] and send to:
The House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

(To find either the name or email address of your MP go to <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>)

We're keen to know how MPs respond to these questions, so when you receive a reply from your MP, please would you send a copy to hucklesbys@methodistchurch.org.uk or the Joint Public Issues Team, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Rd, London NW1 5JR

Other things we can do

Pray – you can find resources for worship or personal reflection on the theme of Peacemaking at: www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/peacemakingsunday

Read Peacemaking: A Christian Vocation, (Methodist Church and United Reformed Church, 2006): <http://bit.ly/zz2hg5>

For further resources on peacemaking and Trident visit:

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/jpitpeacemaking.htm

Produced by the **Joint Public Issues Team** – Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches working together for peace and justice

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