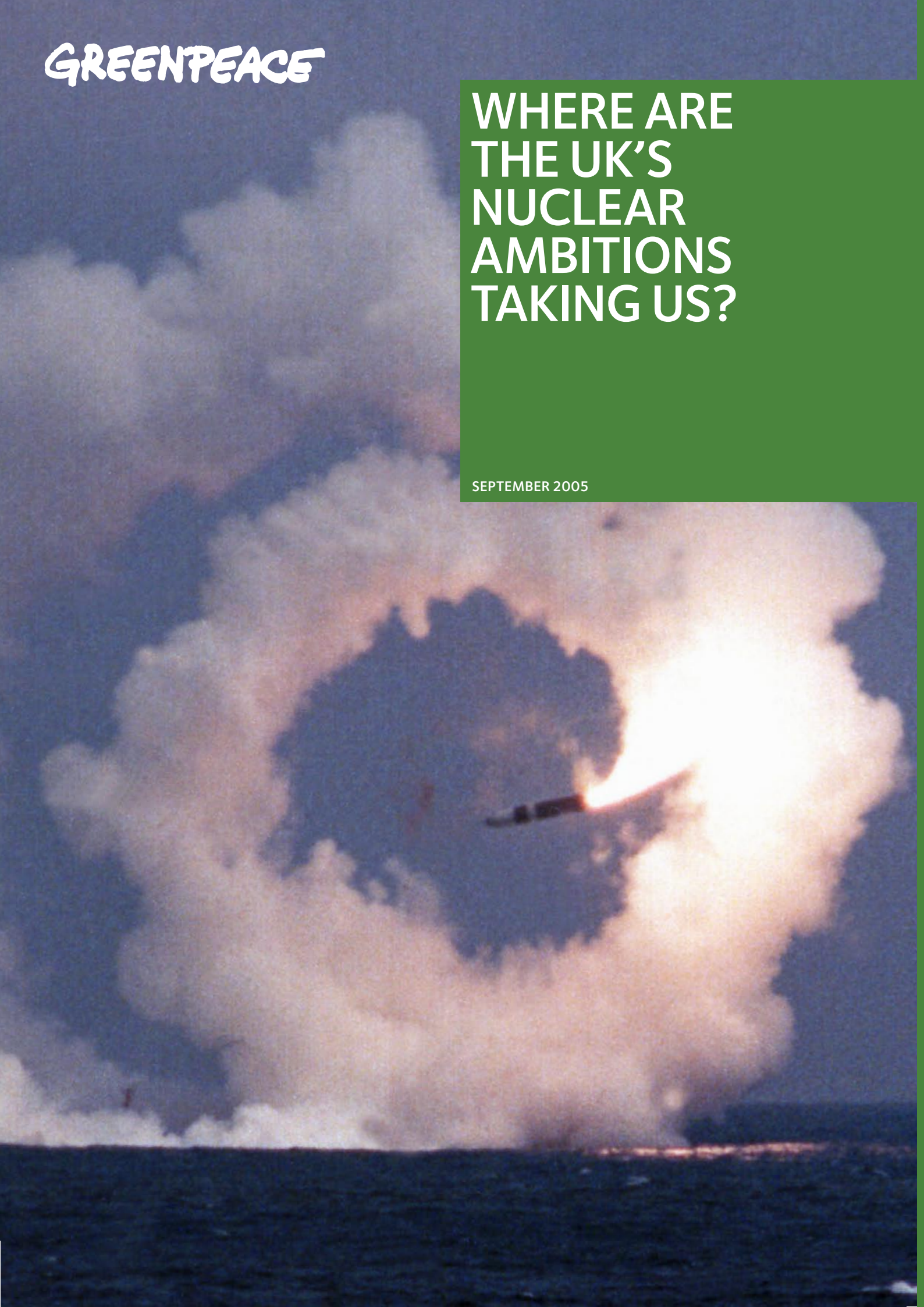


GREENPEACE

**WHERE ARE
THE UK'S
NUCLEAR
AMBITIONS
TAKING US?**

SEPTEMBER 2005



OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE

We now have an extraordinary opportunity to deal with the threat of nuclear weapons. There is no military conflict between the great economic and technological powers. Indeed, they cooperate on a daily basis on trade, investment, health and many other issues. Moreover, the late 1980s and most of the 1990s saw the creation of a positive circle in which citizen action, political initiatives, disarmament treaties and independent verification reinforced each other.

But in May 2005, the impasse at the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) showed that this opportunity may be slipping from our grasp. In these circumstances the Foreign Secretary Jack Straw's subsequent timely call for all states to save the NPT by taking a strong stand on non-proliferation and disarmament is fatally undermined by the UK's continued deployment of its Trident nuclear weapon system and preparations to build a new nuclear weapon. This is in direct contravention of the UK's commitment under the NPT to take progressive steps towards nuclear disarmament, and comes at a time when the Government has admitted that there is no direct military threat to Western Europe and that it does not foresee the emergence of such a threat.

The best way forward for the UK is:

- **to take Trident off patrol and remove its warheads to an internationally monitored storage site;**
- **to abandon immediately all plans to build a new nuclear weapon;**
- **and to work closely with other key states to strengthen existing disarmament treaties and to restart global multilateral disarmament.**

This is a strategy which members of all political parties can unite behind: It would provide reassurance to those who believe that it would be unwise to be completely without a nuclear option while other countries continue to have nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it would make clear the UK's commitment to the NPT and put us at the forefront of the agenda of multilateral nuclear disarmament and peace-building which alone can ward off the return of a Cold War-type situation, in which we as a nation are once again threatened by the thousands of nuclear weapons still retained by the major nuclear powers.

Front cover: Test of Trident D-5 missile off Cape Canaveral, Florida 1989
Below: Breaking the ice of the Cold War: President Gorbachev and Prime Minister Thatcher meet at Chequers in 1984
Opposite: The Trident submarine HMS Victorious returning from patrol



© Sipa Press/Rex Features

'The Soviet Union collapsed long ago. There is no threat from China. The new nuclear weapons states, from India to Israel, do not have the capability to hit us. ... So it seems rather surprising that according to some reports the government has decided to replace the Trident D5 missile and the submarines that carry it, at a cost of tens of billions of pounds.'

Michael Portillo, former Secretary of Defence

*“Neither independent
nor British nor a deterrent.”*

Harold Wilson



© Crown

MADE IN THE USA

The first of the UK's four Trident submarines, HMS Vanguard, carried out its first patrol in December 1994. It was then joined by HMS Victorious, HMS Vigilant and HMS Vengeance. The collapse of the Soviet Union three years before Trident's entry into service meant that by the time Trident was deployed the official rationale for commissioning it – as a deterrent against a Soviet nuclear attack – was no longer relevant.

Ironically, the UK's policy of deterrence had already been undermined by the original 1980s decision to buy a Trident D5 missile capable of getting within one hundred metres of a target four thousand nautical miles away fifty per cent of the time. Trident's specification reflects its origins in the US Defence Department's search for a missile accurate enough to destroy Soviet missiles before they could be fired. In acquiring the Trident D-5, therefore, the UK was buying a missile which undermined the principle of deterrence because its very existence placed the Soviets in the position of having to choose between firing or losing their nuclear missiles if they believed they were being attacked.

The Government's description of Trident as a 'minimum' deterrent makes no sense. Each of the

warheads carried by the D-5 missile has an explosive power equal to 100,000 tons of TNT, making each one eight times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. This means that each time a Trident submarine puts to sea with its full complement of 48 warheads it carries the equivalent of 380 Hiroshima bombs.

The UK is dependent on the US for virtually every aspect of Trident. Aldermaston, where the UK develops its nuclear warheads, and the Devonport facility which services Trident submarines are both part-managed by US firms, respectively Lockheed Martin and Halliburton. The Trident warhead is an adaptation of the US W-76 warhead and is built partly with US components. To develop it the UK relied on the USA letting it use its nuclear test site in Nevada, as the UK does not have its own. Moreover, since the UK has no capacity to produce its own ballistic missiles (as distinct from warheads), the Trident D-5 is leased from the USA and is regularly serviced there. The Trident missile guidance system is also imported from the USA. The UK uses US facilities to communicate with the Trident submarines and to target the missiles, although there is some capacity to target them without US assistance.

'The best way to keep peace is to redefine war on our terms.'

President George W Bush

President Bush with crew members upon landing on the US aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln* after the invasion of Baghdad, when he declared 'great job' and 'mission accomplished,' 1 May 2003



TRIDENT AND THE NEW MILITARISM

Trident is part of the dream that massive investments in new military technologies can enable the USA and its allies to transform 'victory' in the Cold War into permanent global dominance. The basis of this dream is the USA's extraordinary surplus of military power. The USA spends at least 40% of the world's military expenditure, its military budget is equal to those of the next 12 to 15 nations combined.

A particularly forceful statement of this dream was given by George Bush in a speech at Citadel Military Academy in South Carolina prior to his election as president. *'My goal is to take advantage of a tremendous opportunity – given to few nations in history – to extend the current peace into the far realm of the future,'* Bush told the assembled cadets. *'This opportunity is created by a revolution in the technology of war. Power is increasingly defined, not by mass or size, but by mobility and swiftness. Influence is measured in information, safety is gained by stealth, and force is projected on the long arc of precision-guided weapons. This revolution perfectly matches the strength of our country – the skill of our people and the superiority of our technology. The best way to keep peace is to redefine war on our terms.'*

In the USA, nuclear weapons are no longer viewed as a deterrent, as the leaked 2002 Nuclear Posture Review reveals, but as an instrument which US commanders can use to attack deeply buried targets, to destroy chemical and biological warfare facilities and mobile missiles, and to deal with 'surprising military developments.' Indeed, the USA is developing a new generation of nuclear weapons to perform these tasks.

In the UK, meanwhile, the proposition that we need to integrate ourselves into the USA's new military posture is justified in terms of defending our global strategic interests (trade, investment, and access to resources, especially oil). This argument has enabled the military to keep its defence budget at around 70% of the mid-1980s Cold War peak. And it has served to justify a new armoury, including the ordering of two new aircraft carriers whose size approaches that of the US behemoths.

Trident itself has been transformed into a 'sub-strategic' capability by having some missiles carry only a single warhead and by reducing the power of that warhead.

The development of sub-strategic Trident started in 1993, in the lead-up to Trident's entry into service, when its original rationale as a Cold War deterrent had already been overtaken by events. The then Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind argued that by giving Trident a sub-strategic capability the missile could be used to defend the UK's 'strategic interests', as potential aggressors would be much less likely to gamble on the UK's not using the less powerful version for fear of outraging public opinion. The Labour Government has never repudiated this doctrine and has added a further scenario in which it would be prepared to use nuclear weapons overseas: in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon, echoing the USA's new doctrine, repeatedly emphasised that if British forces were threatened by weapons of mass destruction the UK 'reserved the right' to use nuclear weapons preemptively.

The UK's development of sub-strategic Trident may have been the inspiration behind calls for a similar approach in the USA. In 2001 the Director of Sandia nuclear laboratory pressed for the USA to develop its own sub-strategic Trident to target and deter what he termed the 'non-Russian world'.

As well as marking a convergence with new US ideas for using nuclear weapons, the idea of employing Trident to defend British overseas interests marks a return to the 1950s and 1960s, when the UK used nuclear weapons to compensate for its lack of conventional forces as it tried to maintain its position in Asia and the Middle East – for example, using the movement of nuclear V-bombers to Malta and an aircraft carrier with a squadron of nuclear-capable Scimitars to the Gulf in 1961 to signal to Egypt's President Nasser that he should respect British interests in nominally independent Kuwait; or in 1963 sending V-bombers to Singapore, where they were positioned to be seen as ready to eliminate Indonesian Air Force capabilities if they launched air attacks.



Nuclear capable Scimitar jets on
 HMS Eagle in early 1960s

© 2005 Getty Images

'No one seriously imagined that the British bomb ... could ever be used without US agreement. In recent years, it has not even been possible to deploy it without American assistance. "Targeting" is a mutual enterprise. What is the target now? The defence establishment declines to provide an answer.'

Roy Hattersley,
 former Deputy Leader of the Labour Party

A FLAWED DREAM

The fantasy that investments in revolutionary military technologies can replace diplomacy and the rule of law lay at the heart of the US decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan 60 years ago, and has long since been discredited by events.

As US commanders, from General Eisenhower in Europe to General MacArthur in the Pacific, subsequently made clear, there was no military necessity for using the atomic bomb in 1945. President Truman knew that Japan was looking to surrender, and that a combination of a promise to allow it to keep its Emperor, and the Soviet entry into the Pacific war, would almost certainly have obtained a Japanese surrender without the need for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs or an invasion of the Japanese mainland.

In fact, among the more important motivations for the nuclear attacks was the USA's dream that its atomic monopoly could be used as a diplomatic tool for dealing with the Soviet Union. The successful testing of the atomic bomb on 16 July 1945 led to a radical alteration in US strategy. Previously the USA had sought to bring the Soviet Union into the war against Japan. Now Truman raced to end the war with Japan by using atomic weapons, before the Soviets could enter the Pacific theatre and thereby gain a greater say in Asia. Furthermore, Truman's Secretary of State, James Byrnes, saw the atomic bomb as a 'gun behind the door' which could be used to force the Soviets to accept US demands in Europe and Asia.

However, the atomic bomb was not the magic weapon the USA hoped it would be. Having already seen most of their cities devastated by conventional bombing, the Japanese did not lose their will to fight on when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed. Rather it was the combination of the Soviet entry into the Pacific theatre and the US decision to allow them to retain the Emperor which led them to surrender. Meanwhile the Soviet Union was not overawed by Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but instead raced to acquire its own atomic and then hydrogen bombs.

A global nuclear arms race followed. War time cooperation gave way to a Cold War between East and West and to proxy wars across the globe (Korea, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique and Afghanistan). And the atomic bomb's spin-off, nuclear power, has not only produced a mountain of nuclear waste we cannot safely dispose of, but has been the means by which a number of countries have acquired nuclear weapons and by which others may yet do so.

'We escaped the Cold War without a nuclear holocaust by some combination of skill, luck and divine intervention, and I suspect the latter in greatest proportion.'

General Lee Butler, former Commander of US Strategic Nuclear Forces

Below: A Korean woman cries as she mourns her relative who died in the 1950–53 Korean War. Over three million died, many from the use of napalm and incendiaries, in a largely forgotten war in which US commanders requested permission to use atomic weapons.

Bottom: A painting by a survivor of the Hiroshima nuclear blast





The launch of HMS Vanguard, 1992.

'Investment in a new strategic nuclear system would be worse than an irrelevance. It would be an extravagant diversion of resources from priorities more relevant to combating terrorism. Trident cost us more than £12.5 billion – roughly half the whole defence budget for a year. Even if its successor did not have a higher price tag, it could not be bought without cutting back on the conventional capacity of our armed forces.'

Robin Cook, former Foreign Secretary

BRITAIN'S NEW ATOMIC BOMB

During the course of this Parliament, the Government will make a decision on whether to replace Trident. The options being considered include: replacing Trident with a similar submarine ballistic missile; replacing it with a submarine-launched or air-launched nuclear-tipped cruise missile system; and simply extending the life of the existing Trident system. Replacing Trident with a similar submarine ballistic missile system, the most likely option, would cost about £15 billion.

The UK Secretary of Defence, John Reid, has promised a full national debate on the replacement of Trident, but the Government has pre-empted that debate and undercut the supremacy of parliament by undertaking developments which suggest that the only question it is interested in is *which* nuclear weapon the UK should now build:

- The Government is investing around £5 billion on the construction of a high-powered laser, new computers, and other facilities at Aldermaston which would be needed to build a new warhead.
- Aldermaston is recruiting 80 specialist scientists.
- Recent years have seen a rough doubling in the number of meetings between Aldermaston scientists and their counterparts from US nuclear weapons laboratories – Los Alamos in New Mexico and Lawrence Livermore and Sandia in California.

- In 2004, the UK renewed the Mutual Defence Agreement, which provides for technical cooperation between the USA and the UK on the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Government has authorised officials to begin talks with the USA and with defence companies about a successor to Trident.

Any replacement of Trident would directly conflict with the 'unequivocal undertaking' given by the nuclear weapon states in 2000 at the NPT Review Conference 'to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament' in accordance with their NPT obligations. Over the past few years the USA and the UK have already weakened this vital agreement by focusing their criticism on countries which either do not have nuclear weapons (such as Iraq and Iran) or which may have at most a very few (North Korea), while tacitly accepting the development of substantial nuclear arsenals by Pakistan, India and Israel.

At a time when the NPT is already under stress, replacing Trident would undermine the historic accord at the heart of the treaty whereby non-nuclear states agree not to acquire nuclear weapons and the declared nuclear weapon states agree to undertake progressive nuclear disarmament. Moreover, by developing a capacity to build a nuclear weapon without nuclear testing (notwithstanding that this may prove to be impossible) the UK is also undermining the goals of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, in the negotiation of which it played a leading role: namely, to halt the modernisation of world's nuclear arsenals and to make it more difficult for new nations to acquire nuclear weapons.

The ruins of the
Hiroshima Prefectural
Industrial Promotion
Hall, devastated on
6 August 1945

THE CHOICE WE FACE

The British people must have a chance to participate fully in the decision on Trident. All relevant studies must be made public and the Government should work with civil society to organise a nationwide debate about whether replacement is the best choice for the UK. At a time when there is no military threat to Britain the Cold War practice of withholding studies from parliament and the public cannot be justified. In the meantime, there should be a halt to all associated work at Aldermaston.

This will be an important choice for the future of our country. In the current context a UK decision to replace Trident with a new nuclear weapon system would imply support for the Bush Administration's ambitions to secure US military domination over the globe and into the distant future, through investment in military technology, the extension of the USA's global system of military bases, and its willingness to wage pre-emptive war. Such a decision would bind the UK further into that project and make it more difficult for us to avoid being dragged into whatever wars the USA chooses to wage in future.

Greenpeace supports an alternative strategy which would both provide reassurance to those who doubt the wisdom of being without nuclear weapons while other countries continue to have them, and place the UK in a position to take a lead in a revitalised multilateral nuclear disarmament process.

Greenpeace calls for:

- Trident submarines to be immediately be taken off patrol and kept at Faslane. The Trident warheads should be removed from the missiles and placed in an internationally monitored storage facility on land;
- no replacement of the Trident system;
- the Government to work with other European states and with non-nuclear states around the world to strengthen existing disarmament treaties and restart multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Keeping Trident on patrol and commissioning a replacement when there is no threat that needs to be deterred would completely undercut the credibility of British calls for other countries not to develop their own nuclear weapons – it would hardly be surprising if those countries chose to do as we did, rather than as we said.

The greatest threat, however, remains a return of enmity between the major nuclear weapons states and the restarting of a global nuclear arms race. By taking Trident off patrol, storing its warheads, and not commissioning a replacement the UK would be well placed to help restart the multilateral nuclear disarmament process and to make sure that the world does not miss the unique opportunity provided by peace between the major economic and military powers to deal with the nuclear danger and to build an enduring peace. Thus the UK has a powerful opportunity to influence by its own actions, for better or worse, the prospects of a safer global future. Let us be clear what a vital decision this is that we face.

GREENPEACE

Canonbury Villas
London
N1 2PN

www.greenpeace.org.uk
020 7865 8100

Greenpeace's peace campaign is committed to eliminating all weapons of mass destruction and tackling the root causes of global insecurity.