

Campaign

The future of defence

CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** analyses the decisions facing the government on defence spending.



AMONGST the many storms provoked by the Johnson electoral victory, debates about the direction of the UK's defence policy are crucial but under-reported. Last month the *Financial Times* reported that the Prime Minister had cancelled a National Security Council meeting at short notice, following a row over the scope and direction of an anticipated major defence review, due to set Britain's priorities over the next decade.

Reports suggest that a move towards a 'soft power' focus has been mooted and that Johnson's advisor Dominic Cummings

is pushing for a shift in direction to focus on advanced technology, Artificial Intelligence and drones, while the Whitehall establishment favours the traditional approach based around the armed forces and military equipment. Cummings has annoyed the MoD with his disparaging remarks and keen criticism of the new aircraft carriers.

Such a dichotomy has been in evidence for at least a decade. In 2010, the Conservative-led coalition government had a serious rethink of the UK's strategic threats, introducing much of what

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Cummings is referring to and downgrading the risk of state-on-state nuclear conflict. Simultaneously it retained its commitment to Britain's nuclear weapons and the extensive spending involved. In truth, every government since the has tried to ride both horses, the traditional approach and the 21st century reality. Now something's got to give.

There has been widespread concern over the MoD's plans for spending on 'big ticket' projects like the aircraft carriers and Trident replacement, the costs of which seem to be ballooning alarmingly. Basically the money isn't there if the MoD wants also to spend on cyber and improved military intelligence, not to mention meeting the demands of armed forces chiefs who want to upgrade conventional military hardware.

As the *Financial Times* indicates, 'One of the biggest

decisions is whether to maintain Britain's two aircraft carriers and the naval forces needed to protect them, or to find savings from these resource-intensive assets to spend elsewhere.' Absolutely so, but it is high time that the spending debate is extended to properly include Trident replacement. The arguments are indeed compelling not only in terms of opportunity cost but in terms of the probable obsolescence of Trident brought about by the very technologies that the UK is underfunding but other states are piling investment into – notably underwater drone technology and the ability to hack into submarine computer systems.

The recent report from a National Audit Office investigation shows that £1.35 billion has been wasted due to the Ministry of Defence's poor management of nuclear-regulated sites, responsible for the UK's nuclear weapons programme, including Trident replacement. This hardly inspires confidence in those running Britain's so-called defence, and it's high time that the UK nuclear arsenal is jettisoned and our resources instead invested into genuine human security – like dealing with the climate crisis.

Spotlight

This month: **Tavistock Peace Action Group**



Demonstrations against a war with Iran have been held in towns and cities across the country over the past few weeks. Tavistock Peace Action Group is just one CND group that got involved, organising a stall in their town centre to collect signatures for the emergency CND petition.

If you are a CND member or supporter who lives in or around Tavistock, please consider getting involved with the group.

Get in touch by phoning 01822 615960 or sending an email to ginnydavies@onetel.com.

Our history at LSE

CND Campaigns Officer **Sara Medi Jones** explains how CND's history is stored to inspire the next generation of activists.

WHEN we attend our local CND group meeting or get the placards ready for the latest protest, we don't think of ourselves as creating history. But all our individual actions since CND was first set up in 1958 add up to create a campaigning organisation with an important heritage. And this heritage is captured and stored in over 600 boxes of material at the London School of Economics (LSE) library, where CND's archive is kept.

Daniel Payne, the curator for politics and international relations at LSE Library, explains the significance of the CND archive: "The CND archives are important because they provide unique evidence of the activities of a hugely influential organisation that has affected great social change. Its importance is backed up by the number of people that come to visit and study it – it is in the top ten most requested collections at the library."

The archive is catalogued by a team of archivists and covers the founding of CND until the present day, a resource available



free of charge to the public. While the archive mainly focuses on the national organisation, it also includes things such as the minutes of various committees alongside correspondence, planning documents related to Aldermaston marches and demonstrations, posters, leaflets, pamphlets, photographs and badges.

LSE plans a wide variety of events related to the CND archive, including a recent exhibition entitled 'Give Peace a Chance', examining how world peace was sought in the 20th century. Some of the artefacts on display for this included the belongings of Pat Arrowsmith, one of the organisers of the first Aldermaston March.

Pat's collection is one of Daniel Payne's favourite parts of the CND archives. "I have to say it is the papers of Pat Arrowsmith that are the most extraordinary," he says. "These include various papers related to her campaigns on nuclear issues, the Vietnam war, British troops in Northern Ireland and logbooks for marches during her time as Organising Secretary for the first Aldermaston March. Alongside this are her more personal items. (The papers) capture a snapshot of the peace movement."

Daniel Payne also talks about the important educational value of the archive, saying "we use them to teach students about the past and inspire them to take action in the present." And what better use for our history than to motivate the next generation.

■ If you have items that you are considering donating to the archive, or would like to arrange a visit, please get in touch with the library: library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk

For a full, updated list of events, see cnduk.org/events/

Faringdon Peace Group meeting February 5th,

7:30pm, Friends Meeting House, Faringdon SN7 8AL.

■ Contact 01367 710308 or steve.jenny@hotmail.com

An Ethical Foreign Policy Agenda for Britain:

London CND conference

March 7th, 12 noon-5pm
Khalili lecture theatre, SOAS, 10 Thornhaugh Street, London.

■ Contact 020 7607 2302 or info@londoncnd.org

Beyond Nuclear: Helensburgh CND conference April 4th

Adelaide Place Baptist Church, 209 Bath Street, Glasgow.

■ Contact ellen.renton@sky.com

Labour CND conference May 9th

Venue to be announced

■ Contact labourcnd@gmail.com

Peace Camps

Aldermaston Women's

Peace Camp Second weekend of every month.

■ Tel: 07946 676761
info@aldermaston.net
www.aldermaston.net
@Peace_women_AWE

Faslane Peace Camp

Permanent. A814, Shandon, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire G84 8NT.

■ Tel: 07376 188216

Menwith Hill vigil

Every Tuesday 6-7.30pm at the main gate – contact Sarah:

■ Tel: 01765 600928 or sswift64@gmail.com

Meet the staff

This month:
Eve Cuthbert,
CND Finance and
Network Manager



"I am retiring at the end of February, having been CND's Finance & Network Manager for 27 years. My job is to run CND's finances which involves many, many tasks such as payments, banking, bank accounts, audit schedules, preparing draft accounts for CND and NET, payroll, pensions and dealing with the Inland Revenue. I also keep the computers running and sort out any problems.

I wish my successor an easy takeover and hope they enjoy working with the amazing staff at Holloway Road, as I have".

Remember Fukushima
Commemorate the nuclear disaster

Vigil

March 11th,
5.30-6.30pm
Japanese Embassy,
101 Piccadilly, W1 J7

March and rally

March 14th,
12 noon-4pm
Assemble Japanese Embassy

Parliamentary public meeting

March 19th, 7-9pm
Houses of Parliament

For full details see: rememberfukushima.org

