

John Ainslie  
Scottish CND  
15 Barrland Street,  
Glasgow  
G41 1QH

June 5, 2009

Dear John,

Please find enclosed a new report from the University of Bradford's Department of Peace Studies on *Stepping Down the Nuclear Ladder: Options for Trident on a Path to Zero*.

In December 2006 the government announced its intention to begin the process of replacing the current Trident nuclear weapons system due to retire in the mid-2020s, beginning with the procurement of a new generation of ballistic missile submarines.

Throughout the debate on Trident replacement the government has insisted that there are only two options for the future of Britain's nuclear arsenal: 1) business-as-usual through a like-for-like Trident replacement until a global nuclear disarmament process is well under way, or 2) unilateral nuclear disarmament, which remains politically unacceptable to the main parties for now.

This is a false choice. There are credible options that can be pursued in between these two poles. The purpose of the enclosed report is to examine these options, explore the challenges and opportunities and open up debate about realistic possibilities for UK nuclear weapons policy.

The report shows that there are genuine opportunities for the government to demonstrate international leadership by further reducing the size and operational readiness of the UK nuclear arsenal, to reduce the procurement and operational costs of the Trident replacement programme at a time of serious and growing pressure on the defence budget, and to reinforce the renewed global momentum towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

The second enclosure is a fact sheet providing information on developments affecting the Trident replacement programme since parliament voted to begin the process in March 2007 and future decisions for parliamentary scrutiny and debate.

I hope you find the report and fact sheet useful and informative. Please do not hesitate to get in touch at [n.ritchie@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:n.ritchie@bradford.ac.uk) or 01274 236860.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Nick Ritchie



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The Frank Buttle Trust



John Ainslie  
Scottish CND  
15 Barrland Street,  
Glasgow  
G41 1QH

May 5, 2009

**Stepping down the nuclear ladder: options for UK nuclear weapons policy**

Dear John,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a two-day workshop at the University of Bradford's Department of Peace Studies to explore a number of options for further reducing the size and operational readiness of Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system. The workshop will take place on September 18-19, 2009 as part of the Department's *Nuclear-Armed Britain* programme and I would be delighted if you could attend.

It comes at a time when the government is stepping up its programme to replace the current system under way since 2007 but also at a time when the defence budget is under severe pressure, when there is growing international pressure for real progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons, and when the government has stressed its leadership credentials for the forthcoming Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in May 2010.

The purpose of the workshop is to challenge notion that there are only two conceivable options for UK nuclear weapons policy: business-as-usual through a like-for-like Trident replacement until a global nuclear disarmament process is well under way; or unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The workshop will therefore examine the space for realistic policy initiatives in between these two poles, from a 'Trident lite' force to a 'virtual' nuclear arsenal together with the political and conceptual obstacles to changing current force size and posture, operational obstacles affecting ballistic missile submarine operations, training, and expertise, the potential for independent verification of future steps; and political motivations for modifying current policy.

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