

## CND Annual Conference & Day of Action, 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2011

Members from East Lancashire, Lancaster District, and North Cumbria CND groups attended the National Annual Conference at Bradford University on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October. It was clearly shown that the replacement of **Trident Submarine Nuclear Weapon System** had already cost the taxpayer £900 million for planning with a further £3 billion to be spent on design by 2016 before the final decision on whether it goes into production. The full cost of the new Trident programme would cost the public purse over £100 billion. The cost of replacing submarines alone has risen from £11 – 14 billion to £25 billion. What a waste of money, especially in a period of severe cuts to public services, including health and education. We need bread not bombs, welfare not weapons.

As well as not being value for money, Trident serves no useful purpose. The Conference confirmed that Trident is:

- **Illegal** under humanitarian law as the International Court of Justice at the Hague has ruled – it is a crime to threaten peoples with extinction with weapons of mass destruction
- **Offensive** not defensive – under NATO, it is a 'first strike' weapon
- **Not Independent** – the UK relies on the USA for this nuclear weapons system, targeting and control of its use
- **Not a 'Deterrent'** – under the shadow of the nuclear threat, other countries are acquiring nuclear weapons. Wars are still being waged around the world by nuclear powers. You cannot combat terrorism with nuclear weapons. They cannot be tactically targeted against enemies without destroying, murdering, tens of thousands of innocent civilians. It is impossible to fight wars with nuclear weapons and survive.

The Conference also heard about the links **between Nuclear Power and Weapons**, which use civilian fissionable material to make military hardware including the Depleted Uranium shells. Then, there is the cost as well as the danger of radiation, from the transporting, processing and the risks of storing nuclear waste safely. The cost of managing our current waste has mushroomed from £50 billion in the mid 2000s to £80 billion today. We would be mad to add more nuclear waste to this mountain by building a new generation of faulty and expensive nuclear reactors.

On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October, over one hundred Conference delegates made their way to **Menwith Hill, the US Spy Base**, which is fully controlled and operated by the US National Security Agency. There is no democratic accountability to the UK Parliament. The Base is able to monitor and track all civilian and military communications. This means that satellites can pinpoint exactly where we are and what we say on our phones, mobiles, e-mails and internet.

More significantly, Menwith Hill, along with Flyingdales, acts as the 'nerve centre' for the US Missile Defense (Star Wars) programme in Europe. This is a new generation of very expensive and unproven offensive nuclear weapons in space. Under its 'shield', the US has the capacity to launch these offensive weapons from land and sea around the world targeted at states such as Russia and China. Because these bases are located in the UK, we could become a target for enemy strikes while the US is protected by their shield. Ultimately, the US has admitted that their aim is the full spectrum dominance of space, which is illegal under international law.

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Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011