No more Nukes: Time to Scrap Trident!

The Tory UK government has announced a massive increase in the number of Trident nuclear warheads to be held in Scotland at the Faslane submarine base just along the Clyde river from Glasgow.

The integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy published on March 16th included a 40% increase in the nuclear weapons stockpile. The UK currently has around 200 warheads, but had previously announced a cap of 180 by the mid-2020s. It will now increase this cap to 260 warheads.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament immediately called an emergency online protest rally addressed by speakers such as Green MP Caroline Lucas and former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn – the rally can be watched here.

Scottish CND was already planning a campaign against Trident and other nuclear weapons for the forthcoming Scottish Parliament elections on Thursday 6th May. An online public meeting of Scottish CND discussed this campaign on 17 March and was well attended by activists from across Scotland.

Candidates contesting the Scottish Election are to be asked: 1) to commit to supporting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to outlawing nuclear weapons; and 2) to commit to disarming the UK's nuclear arsenal in Scotland by the most direct route possible; and 3) to speak out publicly, and commit to sign the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Parliamentarians' Pledge if they are elected.

With the entire UK arsenal of nuclear weapons based in Scotland, how the parties line up on 6th May will be an important aspect of the Scottish Parliament elections. The Tories will be supporting nuclear weapons and their government

at Westminster will be pursuing the replacement of the Trident system at an estimated eventual cost of 200 billion pounds. The leadership of Keir Starmer means that the UK Labour Party will also line up with the Tories and support nuclear weapons and Trident replacement. The Scottish Labour Party conference voted in 2015 to oppose Trident and its renewal. However in its manifesto for the UK General Election in December 2019, Scottish Labour declared that as defence was a matter 'reserved' for the Westminster parliament Scottish Labour candidates would back the UK Party policy of supporting Trident. The new Scottish Labour leader, Anas Sarwar, has made noises that the Scottish party will maintain opposition to Trident but it remains to be seen whether they will back Starmer's leadership or risk a row within the party. The SNP say they are against Trident and want to scrap Britain's nuclear weapons. However in 2012, the SNP changed their policy on NATO from opposition to one of support. Under SNP leadership, an independent Scotland would join NATO. But NATO is a first and foremost a nuclear alliance and members face considerable pressure to accept nuclear weapons – no NATO member has yet signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and would face possible expulsion were they to do so. At a recent online seminar on whether an independent Scotland could rejoin the EU, a leading expert argued that it would have to show commitment to "EU values" by joining NATO first (EU-NATO coordination is expanding rapidly and all EU member states are encouraged to support NATO). The Scottish Green Party are the only one of the existing parties in the Holyrood parliament who support CND's policies of opposition to both nuclear weapons and NATO.

JOIN CND! STOP TRIDENT! NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN SCOTTISH WATERS!

Mike Picken, ecosocialist.scot 19 March 2021