



Nearly fifty years ago I was second-in-command of a Polaris submarine, always at 15 minutes notice to launch our missiles if UK/NATO was under attack with nuclear weapons. Thirty years later, post the Cold War, and now retired from the Navy, I fully expected the UK to give up its nuclear deterrent as yesterday's weapon. However, successive governments have stoked fears of a nuclear attack despite warheads not being targeted and missiles stood down at several days' notice to fire since the mid-1990s.

These realities were significantly absent from the 2016 Parliamentary debate which approved proceeding with the Trident-armed *Vanguard* class successor, *Dreadnought*. The debate was low on facts but very high on jingoism as successive speakers sought, metaphorically, to wrap Union Flags around themselves. There was no discussion of Government policy, which I now know does not exclude a pre-emptive strike to deter a non-nuclear attack on forces deployed abroad, as Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon asserted in 2002.

PM Theresa May suggested that anyone who did not support the 2016 motion was defending our country's enemies (treason by any other name) and that she was quite prepared 'to press the button and kill 100,000 innocent men, women and children'. However, it is, of course, the Trident submarine Commanding Officer who must 'press the button', almost certainly unaware of the specific circumstances behind the order to do so and unable to form a legal or moral judgement and now conscious of the new UN *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*. This Treaty will exert further pressure on the nuclear weapon States to at least begin negotiating the multilateral '...general and complete disarmament...' they signed up to in 1968 by Article VI of the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*. No disarmament - or negotiations to do so - have taken place.

Why Trident? brings together a number of my articles published over the last few years challenging Government policy, together with my submissions to two Government inquiries and a long but unrewarding exchange of letters with the Ministry of Defence. I am extremely grateful to Spokesman Books, imprint of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation for enabling my views to be more widely published. All proceeds are retained by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation for the purpose of further such projects as this.

Yours sincerely,

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