

campaign

The wrong priorities



CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** asks why Britain isn't prepared for the coronavirus?

In these lockdown days, we are all united in our desire to see our NHS staff made safe through the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), our sick given the very best treatment to combat the virus and recover. We all want to see a vaccine produced as rapidly as possible, to defeat the virus.

Yet we find ourselves in a situation where the NHS has been chronically underfunded for a decade or more, and supplies of

necessary equipment, facilities and materials just aren't there. Maybe this would be understandable if no one had realised that pandemics were a real threat; but that just isn't the case. They have been on the high-risk radar of experts – and government – for a long time.

In 2005, Tony Blair's government published a National Security Strategy which proudly stated: 'The World Health Organisation has recognised the United

Kingdom as being in the vanguard in preparing for a pandemic and we will continue to improve our capacity to minimise the potential effects of a pandemic...'

But it wasn't just Blair's government that saw the risks. In 2010, the Coalition Government identified a natural hazard such as an influenza pandemic as a tier one risk to our security and in 2015 again the risk assessment included the tier one category 'Public Health: Disease,

have not been made.

But we don't have to look far to see what has gone wrong. The last two security strategies have designated the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation and use as a tier two threat. Yet the governments that have produced these risk assessments have chosen to automatically pour £205 billion into a new nuclear weapons system to 'meet' this lower level threat, leaving the health system chronically underfunded and unable to meet

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particularly pandemic influenza, emerging infectious diseases and growing Antimicrobial Resistance...'. And in 2018 the May government produced a Biological Security Strategy, addressing these key issues.

So successive governments of different political persuasions have all rightly identified the risk which pandemics pose yet the necessary levels of investment

the challenge of a pandemic.

Once again our government is shown to have the wrong priorities. The consequences could not be more stark: many thousands of us will be left to die, many in the most terrible conditions. Together we must stand up to this brutal and callous government and demand the right to live, in peace and genuine human security.

Wash our hands of Trident to combat Covid-19: Lobby your MP

Write to your MP today to tell them it's time for the government to wash its hands of Trident so that we can address the real security threats we face.

<https://cnd.eaction.org.uk/coronavirus>

Spotlight

Support your local CND Group

While most of us are spending a lot more time at home during the coronavirus crisis, this could be a good time to further support the campaigns and organisations we care about. One way to get more involved in CND is by supporting your local group.

There are CND groups located across the country, and they would love to hear from you so that you can join the next action. Why not get in touch?

For a full list of CND groups, see <https://cnduk.org/local-groups/> Or contact enquiries@cnduk.org with any queries.

New Labour leader

Daniel Blaney from Labour CND analyses the Labour leadership election result.

KEIR STARMER was announced as the new leader of the Labour Party over the weekend, replacing CND Vice-President Jeremy Corbyn.

Keir Starmer voted in favour of Trident replacement in the 2016 parliamentary vote on building new submarines for the nuclear weapons system. His new Shadow Defence Secretary John Healey did the same. However, the newly-appointed Shadow Foreign Secretary, Lisa Nandy voted against, even though she indicated earlier this year that she would be prepared to support a new system. Campaigning will continue for Labour as a whole to recognise the folly of Trident, especially as the coronavirus pandemic highlights our real security needs and the ability to diversify industry away from weapons to socially useful production.

During the leadership election, Labour CND – CND’s specialist section for Labour Party members – pressured the candidates to commit to retaining the position of Shadow Minister

for Peace and Disarmament, a front-bench position which Corbyn created. Labour CND devised a lobbying tool for activists to quickly email all candidates, and their Labour MP if they had one.

Rebecca Long Bailey, standing for leader, and Richard Burgon, standing for deputy leader, replied positively and stated their view that the position of Shadow Minister for Peace should be retained. Angela Rayner – the victor in the deputy leadership election – noted the ‘great job’ Fabian Hamilton had done in the role, and stated: ‘I absolutely believe that there should be a front-bench spokesperson with specific responsibility for disarmament.’ Disappointing then that Starmer’s new cabinet does not include such a role.

Starmer had replied to us, but was silent on retaining this position. Instead, his campaign team wrote: ‘Keir wants to see a world without nuclear weapons and supports multilateral efforts towards disarmament.’ A key task now to ask whether those efforts (described by his team in the plural) include a Labour

government led by Keir Starmer signing the UN’s nuclear ban treaty!

Labour policy-making processes did change under Corbyn. This has modestly improved the likelihood of local parties and affiliates placing issues of nuclear weapons, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Trident and defence diversification on the agenda of Labour Party conference.

Whether the planned September 2020 conference in Liverpool takes place in full, given the pandemic, is uncertain. But Labour CND will keep a diligent eye on developments under the new leadership, and will be campaigning for Labour to develop further policies for peace and nuclear disarmament. An early commitment must be made to scrap Trident and concentrate instead on our real security needs, such as investment in health and the climate crisis.

■ Do keep in touch with Labour CND’s activities at www.labourcnd.org.uk

Due to the coronavirus crisis, all in-person public events have been cancelled for the next few weeks. But you can join CND, and our groups, for virtual events, see below. And keep checking our website for further online activity.

**It's the economy, stupid:
how neoliberalism
undermines our security**

3pm, April 11th

CND webinar with Professor Paul Rogers.

■ Watch live on CND's Facebook page or contact pressooffice@cnduk.org for more information.

**War in Space: Weaponising
the 'Final Frontier'**

6pm, April 17th

Webinar with Yorkshire CND and the Global Network

■ For information on how to join: info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk .

**London CND will be holding
weekly training sessions**

for members who would like to get to grips with social media campaigning. We'll be covering Twitter, Facebook and creative content.

■ Join us every Wednesday, online at 3pm. Email ahead to join: info@londoncnd.org

**Temporary
office closure**

The CND national office in London is currently closed, following government instructions in response to the coronavirus crisis. All staff are working remotely however so (most!) work should continue as normal.

Meet the staff

This month:

Sue Longbottom, Designer



"I design CND campaigning and publicity materials, which may involve coming up with new branding or designing a new campaign logo. On other occasions, it's a matter of updating and organising reprints of our ongoing publications. I am responsible for 'print buying', which involves liaising with the printers, getting quotes for orders and booking in jobs on time. Regular publications include the monthly online *Campaign* magazine, *Summer Campaign* and our annual *Campaign Review* which go to all our members.

I also photograph events and am responsible for maintaining and updating our photo library."

Kate Hudson is staying on temporarily as General Secretary and recruiting for the role has been put on hold while this crisis lasts.

Feel free to get in touch with us by emailing enquiries@cnduk.org or phoning 07891 870732 (between 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday).

