

## Letters About Trident in The Sevenoaks Chronicle

2 June 2016

### ■ TRIDENT

#### Questions for Michael Fallon

I HAVE been following the debate on Trident in the Chronicle, and it seems to me this is such an important issue we should be having the same 'national debate' around it as we are currently having on the European Union.

The moral argument against has been well put by Jim Pragnell and my question to Michael Fallon, in his role as Defence Secretary, is simply who is he planning to use these weapons against?

Surely the days of the Cold War are long gone, and in the words of the former head of Britain's armed forces, Field Marshall Lord Bramall, nuclear weapons are "completely useless as a deterrent to the threats and

scale of violence we currently, or are likely, to face."

Surely these billions of pounds could be better spent?

Kevin Flack  
New Road  
South Darenth

9 June 2016

### ■ TRIDENT

#### Case would test legal principle

IN HIS letter last week Kevin Flack said he wanted a national debate about Trident.

This follows the story in your paper that the group I am involved in are trying to start a criminal prosecution against the office of the Secretary of State for Defence for planning a war crime. We believe that the UK's threat to use Trident against an adversary is a war crime. Nuclear states would prefer that the public didn't think too much about the actual use of nuclear weapons, as this detracts from their dogma of nuclear deterrence.

Deterrence requires a near-perfect understanding of the state of mind of an enemy from whom we would be deeply alienated. Get this wrong and the consequences could quickly escalate into something very dire for both the adversary and us. This is not just my opinion. It is the opinion of US General Lee Butler.

The International Court of Justice has declared in an advisory opinion that the rules of humanitarian law apply to nuclear weapons, which for most people makes their use and threatened use illegal. But nuclear deterrence has become institutionalised since the Cold War, and nuclear states try to

skate round the World Court's opinion. The aim of our group's criminal prosecution is for a UK court to examine objectively if the threat to use Trident is in fact criminal, as we believe it is.

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