



Green Party

VOTE SHIRLEY FORD

Your anti-war Green candidate for South Shields

We live in an era of massive military spending, yet the world seems increasingly insecure. Britain and the USA are said to be leading a 'war on terror' however they have created even more fear and hatred, both at home and the world at large.

Our existing 'defence' policy is making the world more dangerous by challenging violence and supporting harsh regimes. Yet the British taxpayers subsidise the international arms trade by almost £1 billion a year and the annual British arms exports are the second largest in the world.

The first objective of all government policy should be to provide real, sustainable human security. However, this cannot be achieved through military aggression.

Instead we must focus on the real fundamental causes of insecurity that exist across the world, working to reduce poverty and increase trust between people.

The Green Party would:

- Ensure that the British military is only used in self defence, or as a last resort, within an international UN-led policing force.
- Improve the military to promote human security, by focusing only on defence not aggression and specialising in crisis prevention, emergency relief and conflict resolution.
- Seek binding global agreements against all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.
- End all export subsidies and increase controls on UK arms sales, especially to governments who violate human rights.

Was it right to go to war against Iraq?

No. The war against Iraq was illegal and immoral. It undermined international law and has refreshed a dangerous global order based on military aggression.

But surely we should take a stand against brutal dictators?

Yes, however, the war on Iraq was not in any real sense 'humanitarian', with thousands killed and no viable post-war peace plan established. Dictators must be dealt with jointly using international laws.

But is it realistic to rely on the UN?

It can be. The UN has been undermined for decades by powerful governments. Instead, Britain should be supportive of the UN in upholding international law and developing the capacity to respond effectively to global threats.

How would the Greens fight terrorism?

Democratic societies need to protect themselves against those seeking to use terror and violence against them. The police and intelligence services should be well resourced and given enough freedom to operate. But counter-terrorist measures should not undermine the very principles of accountability and justice on which democratic societies are founded. We disagree with the use of random arrest or imprisonment and the manipulation of fears about militant Islam to promote racist agendas, push through repressive policies or justify wasteful defence spending.

Would you cut military expenditure?

Yes, the defence budget needs to be sufficient to ensure security. We would dismantle our nuclear weapons, reduce our forces and cut subsidies to the arms industry. But we should be well equipped for policing and defensive operations.

The decision to replace the UK's Trident nuclear weapons systems is a catastrophe, costing over £25 billion. It is also hypocritical to replace Trident when the government lectures countries like Iran on international law designed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

Vote Shirley Ford. Your anti-war Green candidate for South Shields

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