

Labour Party Branch resolution Defence Diversification, 2019

This branch notes that:

1.1 In 2017 the TUC Congress passed a resolution, 'Defence, Jobs and Diversification'. It called on trade unions and the TUC to lobby the Labour Party to establish a Shadow Defence Diversification Agency (DDA) that would draw up practical plans for arms conversion while protecting skilled employment and pay levels.

1.2 In 2018 the North West Labour, which represents a region where many military industry jobs are located, adopted the creation of a Shadow DDA as policy.

1.3 Labour's 2017 Manifesto commits a Labour government to leading multilateral efforts with international partners and the UN to create a nuclear-free world and implement the Arms Trade Treaty to a consistently high standard, including ceasing arms exports to countries where there is concern that they will be used to violate international humanitarian law.

1.4 'Defence' industry lobby group ADS estimates that the sector directly employed 140,000 people in 2018 in the UK, down from 155,000 in 2000/01 and 405,000 in 1980/81. The UK cannot afford to lose any more manufacturing skills and capacity and military industry workers are rightly concerned about the continuing long-term decline in jobs in the sector.

This branch believes that:

2.1 The Labour Party should adopt an industrial strategy compatible with a foreign policy guided by values of peace, universal rights and international law, rather than the present UK government policy which supports power projection and global influence backed by military supremacy.

2.2 The Labour Party should take a broader view of security and increase investment in industries which address wider environmental and social challenges. For example, greater support for the renewable energy industry would help mitigate climate change and reduce global instability caused by climate-related conflict and displacement. This would form part of a national industrial strategy to enhance manufacturing capacity in the UK and ensure the regionally equitable distribution of skilled jobs.

2.3 The best way to protect jobs and skills in the declining military industrial sector would be for a Shadow DDA to work with all interested parties, including the unions and local authorities, to prepare long-term plans to convert this manufacturing capacity to produce goods in high-tech, growth areas such as wind and marine energy where the creation of alternative, sustainable, socially-useful employment is possible.

2.4 A Shadow DDA would help a future Labour Government deliver its goals both of an ethical foreign policy and of secure, sustainable and skilled jobs.

This branch resolves to:

3.1 To adopt the creation of a Shadow Defence Diversification Agency (DDA) as branch policy.

3.2 To call on our CLP to adopt the creation of a Shadow DDA as CLP policy.

3.3 To call on our regional Labour Party to debate this issue at its Annual Conference 2019 and to adopt the creation of a Shadow DDA as policy.

3.4 To call on Labour's National Policy Forum to adopt the creation of a Shadow DDA as policy and to include plans to launch such an Agency in its report(s) to Labour's Annual Conference 2019.