



OXFORD CND

NEWSLETTER

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CLIMATE NOT TRIDENT



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Facing the Future

May we hope for a better year... Many of us will have inscribed this message or something with a similar meaning on our seasonal greeting cards. Many of us will feel that we could hardly have had a worse one in 2019. But this is a time to look forward: what will, what could, 2020 bring? *The Observer's* eve of new year Focus feature lays out its own predictions. Brexit will be done but not dusted; the climate crisis will continue to set the agenda culminating in the November global summit; veganism will make further progress and the Royals will face more stormy times. All credit to *The Observer* for putting the climate crisis (no longer merely "climate change") high on the agenda and for saying clearly that we are in the zone of last chance. Somehow, we have crossed a threshold of perception into a world where the apocalyptic now looks like the actual, or very close to it.

It may seem churlish to point out that this is not the only existential crisis facing us, but 2020 will see not only the UN COP26 talks in Glasgow, but also the equally vital 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Treaty in New York. The year will be the fiftieth Anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty, and the 25th Anniversary of its indefinite extension, both landmarks in the struggle against proliferation, but the Review comes with storm clouds already hanging over it. There is no need to go into great detail: the last year has seen the creeping collapse of the Iranian nuclear deal; doubts over a new START treaty, stalemate over the North Korean nuclear programme, and the failure of the NPT itself to reach a consensus at its preparatory meeting in 2019. And in the closing days of 2019, President Putin announced the deployment of Russia's new hypersonic cruise-type missile system which could deliver nuclear weapons at five times the speed of sound. The US and China, we are told, are busy developing their own counterpart – and these new systems will be an added complication to any chance of negotiating a new START treaty. With the prospect

of a new nuclear balance of terror in which there is no time for reflection – not twenty, ten or even four – is this not too an apocalyptic vision now verging on the actual?

Putin's nuclear braggadocio should be condemned by all peace campaigners without slipping into the semi-apologetics of which we are sometimes guilty. No nuclear weapons east or west was the call of the European Nuclear Disarmament movement and it should be ours. What needs to be challenged is the prevailing mind-set of nuclear strategists and nuclear-prone politicians, whether

they are in Moscow, Beijing, Washington, London or the capital of any other nuclear weapons state. Deterrence for them is a zero-sum game. One more missile system is by definition one more threat. No one asks what is or what might be the nature of that threat, a question never posed to the think-tank experts called on these occasions to be interviewed on the Today programme. The British argument these days (and since the days of Tony Blair) for renewing Trident seems to be (a) that we cannot

predict what will happen in 50 years time, so we have to plan for the worst and (b) that the worst might include being threatened with nuclear weapons by Russia or North Korea. Can anyone really construct a credible scenario where that might happen, and in what other area of policy do governments wash their hands of the responsibility for intelligent prediction? It is not enough to say that nuclear weapons are wrong: we must say that the arguments for them are devoid of logic.

There is another anniversary coming up in 2020 – the 75th anniversary of end of World War 2 and of the setting up of the United Nations. We are likely to hear much more about the first than about the second, but they are inextricably linked. Despite failures and constraints the UN has achieved a great deal and is today the only effective forum in which to counter an Orwellian vision of threat and counter-threat leading towards war. ■

John Gittings



Towards a global nuclear ban treaty

CND – What the general election means for us

There is no doubt the extra Conservative MPs in England and Wales – and the loss of some anti-Trident Labour MPs – make a difficult parliamentary terrain for change in nuclear policy.

But the election results shouldn't be interpreted as reflecting a growing enthusiasm for nuclear weapons. A recent article in The Times acknowledged that polling data showed falling support for Trident. Another poll commissioned during the election by the same newspaper asked whether the British prime minister should be willing to authorise the use of nuclear weapons. A minority said the PM should – 57% said they shouldn't or they didn't know.

During the general election, the Lib Dem leader Jo Swinson was heavily criticised for her glib 'yes' response to whether she would press the nuclear button. A CND video which highlighted her inappropriate reply was viewed over 1 million times and Swinson went on to lose her seat to a candidate from the anti-Trident Scottish National Party.

Scotland – an increased anti-nuclear majority

The SNP gained an extra 13 seats, bringing their total to 48 out of 59 Scottish constituencies. Party leader Nicola Sturgeon spoke very clearly and passionately against nuclear weapons throughout the election, which won her plaudits on social media and big rounds of applause in the leaders'

debates. SNP MPs will be a powerful voice for nuclear disarmament in Westminster.

The role of our movement

We thank everyone who lobbied the election candidates – we received hundreds of replies. The legacy of this work is the relationships we have forged with candidates who are now MPs – we will invite them to campaign with us in Parliamentary CND. Quite a number of candidates who weren't elected have become members of CND and plan to work with us from their localities.

Nevertheless, the Conservative majority in Westminster will leave many feeling pessimistic. Our movement has a crucial role to play in turning around the political situation on vital existential questions. We must give voice to the growing millions who oppose nuclear weapons. We must strengthen our links and solidarity with other campaigning organisations and movements who strive to build a better, just, more peaceful world.

Our vision of a world without nuclear weapons is needed now more than ever – as is our experience and commitment to change. Success will not come from waiting and hoping that the next election will deliver something better. It will come from our continuing work – and its intensification which we begin today – building together the kind of world the majority of humanity wants to see. ■

AWE – Enhanced regulatory attention

The two Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) sites at Aldermaston and Burghfield will both remain in enhanced regulatory attention until at least 2021, a year longer than previously expected, according to the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). The sites have now been under enhanced attention for around six years, rather than the two years that was predicted in 2013 when they were first placed in that category. AWE Burghfield was briefly moved into routine regulatory attention during 2015, but was moved back into enhanced attention in 2016 due to failures to improve safety performance.

Enhanced is the second highest of three categories of regulatory attention. The AWE sites were originally put under enhanced attention because of compliance and safety issues, the reliance on ageing facilities and delays to replacement facilities.

In the 2018 annual report ONR predicted that AWE would be able to leave enhanced attention in 2020. However, an inspection in March 2019 to pave the way for the change determined that insufficient progress had been made.

The Chief Nuclear Inspector's report reveals that the Mensa building, which will replace the Assembly Technology Centre (ATC) where nuclear warheads are currently assembled and disassembled, is now expected to be completed in 2023. ONR say that safety improvements to the ATC, which it required to be made as a condition of work continuing at the facility, are being made at a satisfactory rate.

The report also says that AWE has begun to improve waste storage arrangements and reduce the total quantity of radioactive waste stored at Aldermaston. It is not clear whether this means that waste transports to Sellafield for processing have already begun. ■

USAF Croughton

The news about the diplomatic status of the US citizen Anne Sacoolas has concentrated on the campaign of the parents of Harry Dunn, a 19-year-old British man who died following a road traffic collision on August 27 outside the secretive US air force base at (RAF) USAF Croughton.

What has received less attention in the mainstream media is the nature of the operations at (RAF) USAF Croughton, and the secretive aspect of her husband's work and the way Britain is being used as Washington's forward Atlantic military base.

RAF Croughton is in fact run by the US Air Force and is patrolled by armed US forces, and guarded by MOD police paid by the US. It is a major hub for US military and clandestine communications under the control of the National Security Agency (NSA).

It looks likely that the Trump scheme for a Space Force, a sixth branch of United States armed forces, will happen. The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the \$738 billion military policy bill that gives Trump his sought-for Space Force as he moves for what he terms "American dominance in space." Space Force will need ground stations such as USAF Croughton.

Establishment of a U.S. Space Force would come despite the landmark Outer Space Treaty of 1967, put together by the U.S., then Soviet Union and the U.K., designating space as a global-commons to be used for peaceful purposes.

The U.S. move to negate the intent of the Outer Space Treaty will cause Russia and China to respond in kind—especially considering Trump's declaration that "it is not enough to merely have an American presence in space. We must have American dominance in space." This will lead to an arms race in space.

Thus, Space Force would have two primary missions – give the Pentagon full control of the Earth and control the pathway on and off the Earth – both on behalf of corporate interests.

Allies are in the early stages of collaboration with the newly created U.S. Space Force, which has hosted its first "five eyes" level briefing and authorized its first collaborative task order.

According to an announcement by the U.S. Air Force, Group Captain Darren Whiteley, a Royal Air Force officer from Britain and the deputy director of the Combined Space Operations Center, recently signed the first combined tasking order for Space Force command units.

"Allied partnerships are critical to defending our assets at home and in the space domain," Whiteley said. "The threat is expanding and international collaboration is essential to strengthen deterrence against hostile actors. Through these partnerships we are able to expand the depth and multiply the effects we can have to those evolving threats."

The task order is the first by a coalition partner under Operation Olympic Defender, a multinational effort intended to optimize space operations and share information between allies.

"Five eyes" is a military term referring to intelligence sharing and collaboration between Australia, Canada, Britain, the United States and New Zealand.

Oxford CND is part of the Oxfordshire Peace Campaign group that monitors and campaigns against the work of USAF Croughton. The latest information can be found on:

<http://www.fraw.org.uk/frn/cw/cw-about.html>

Nuclear convoys are a 'disaster waiting to happen.'

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament hits out at the MoD after reports show 40 lapses in safety since 2014 while nuclear and radioactive materials were being transported across the country

DOZENS of safety failures during nuclear weapons convoys are a "disaster waiting to happen," campaigners charged as they demanded the Ministry of Defence (MoD) answer for the risks it is exposing the public to.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and political campaigners have hit out at the MoD after concerning reports show 40 lapses in safety

while nuclear and radioactive materials were being transported across the country over the past five years.

A Freedom of Information request has revealed the 40 operational and engineering issues on convoys carrying bombs and hazardous materials.

Multiple "operational" issues also disrupted transportation of dangerous materials.

CND general secretary Kate Hudson said: "Nuclear bombs carried on our roads are a disaster waiting to happen. ■"

EDF – Hinkley Point C

The edifice already heading for the status of the largest and most expensive construction project in the world, the Hinkley C nuclear power station in the UK, is dragging its builder, the French giant EDF, into ever-deeper debt: the company's flagship reactor is facing still more delay. Although EDF is a vast company, owning 58 reactors in France alone, and is 85% owned by the French state, it owes around €60 billion (\$67bn), a debt expected to increase by €3 billion (\$3.35bn) a year. This has led some city analysts, notably S&P Global, to downgrade the company's prospects to "negative" – which is essentially a recommendation to shareholders to sell. Apart from the problem

that EDF's fleet of reactors in France is operating well beyond their original design life and are in constant need of safety and maintenance upgrades, the company's main problem is its flagship, the European Pressurised Water Reactor (EPR), which is getting into ever-greater difficulties. In Europe there are four EPRs under construction: the two barely begun at Hinkley Point in Somerset in the west of England; one in northern France at Flamanville in Normandy and the original prototype in Finland, known as Olkiluoto 3 (OL3). The extraordinary fact is that, although OL3 was due to start up in 2009, it is still incomplete, and its start date has just been put back again – until 2021. ■

EDF – Hunterston B

A vital scrutiny meeting scheduled to take place before troubled reactors are switched back on at Hunterston Power Station was cancelled – because of the general election. and will not reconvene until March, after the proposed reactivation dates.

The Hunterston Site Stakeholders Group had been due to meet on December 5th where they would have quizzed EDF on the decision to reactivate two reactors blighted by safety concerns.

It was revealed that reactor four is due to go back online fully from February 15 and reactor three on January 15.

At the quarterly meetings, held in public, councillors and local community council groups can question nuclear chiefs about the power plant and its operation.

Councillor Ian Murdoch believes that it is imperative that a scrutiny meeting takes place before the reactors are switched back on after cracks were found in their graphite cores.

The acceptable threshold of cracks has been extended from 350 to 700 by regulators ONR, who recently gave permission for Hunterston reactor 4 to be brought back online for a four-month spell.

The emergency zone around Hunterston B, an ageing nuclear power plant in Scotland, sprawls for more than 2km in every direction. Residents of this zone are regularly given iodine pills to take in the event of a nuclear disaster.

However, French state-owned EDF Energy has

come under fire for attempting to reduce the emergency zone potentially exposing residents further away to harmful levels of radiation if an accident were to take place.

Activists claim the zone should be expanded rather than contracted.

But proposals to North Ayrshire Council by the operator, French state-owned EDF Energy, has proposed **reducing the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone to 1km radius of the station.**

Responsibility for setting the zone has transferred from the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) to the local authority.

Alan Hill, councillor for North Coast and Cumbraes, said: "The public have a right to be alarmed at this proposal to reduce the emergency zone around Hunterston at a time when significant degradation of the reactor core has been documented and the ONR has placed special conditions on EDF for continued operation.

"The new planning regime has been brought in, in light of experience from the Fukushima Daiichi disaster in Japan."

A spokeswoman for EDF Energy said: "This updated legislation relates to every nuclear site in the UK and is not specific to Hunterston B.

"The advice given to North Ayrshire is based on robust information and the minimum distance recommended reflects the advice previously given to the official nuclear regulators. The final decision on the zone rests with the local authority, which will consider this report alongside other local factors." ■

Remembrance Sunday 10th November 2019

There was a Peace Remembrance gathering at the Peace Plaque in Bonn Square on Remembrance Sunday.

This followed a Remembrance Sunday service in the adjacent New Road Baptist Church in Bonn Square, led by the new minister, the Revd. John Keyworth. A gold Peace banner made by Maureen Wilsker was displayed at the front of the church. Some Oxford CND members joined

the congregation. The service had readings and prayers for peace, contributions from the congregation, and two minutes silence.

The congregation then moved outside to the Peace Plaque, where there were further prayers, reflection and the reading of the poem, "Say 'No' to Peace" (by Brian Wren) to conclude the gathering at the Peace Plaque. ■



No to NATO – No to TRUMP

The NATO Leaders Meeting took place on 3rd and 4th December 2019. At the summit one result was that NATO declared space as a 'warfighting domain.' A small demo was held in Carfax, Oxford, on 3rd December to demonstrate our objections. ■



RAF/USAF Upper Heyford: Cold War Heritage 'Path of MADness' – Sunday 26th January 2020

The former Cold War air base at RAF Upper Heyford (actually operated since 1950 by the USAF Strategic Air Command) was closed in 1994. Since then a significant number of houses have been built and the military buildings and hardstandings used for commercial purposes. The future shape of the base was decided at a planning appeal in 2009 with further development allocated through a Local Plan adopted in 2015. Mercifully, the landscape of the Cold War; 56 Hardened Aircraft Shelters, runways, Battle Command Centre, Avionics building, and Nuclear Bomb Stores are largely intact and contribute to a profound heritage experience. A heritage centre is now being operated on site, subject to very limited opening times, from which guided tours are run during the warmer months. (www.upperheyfordheritage.co.uk) The base is regarded by Historic England as the best-preserved remains from the Cold War.

The heritage centre covers both the history of the Cold War and the history of the base at Upper Heyford (benefiting from the very detailed accounts kept by local resident Tony Gorman), including the part played by its F111s in the raid on Libya in 1986. The peace demonstrations and camp get a mention.

The display boards and artefacts contain little that is original or not available from research at home or library and a 20min video made shortly

after the military operations ceased describes the rich history of the aircraft using the base since 1916. However, a trip to the base is really only justified if the opportunity to take a tour is available, taking time to contemplate the Cold War landscape, reflecting on for what it was designed and what it implies in terms of nuclear war and Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).

Every Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) the Path of MADness is organized to hold a memorial service (to victims of genocides), and to walk the Nato runway designed and built to deliver "physics packages" (ie nuclear bombs) on countries of the Warsaw Pact. This is an opportunity to reflect on the madness of planning a nuclear holocaust, of which Hiroshima and Nagasaki were real examples.

Path of MADness will be an opportunity to explore the theme for HMD 2020: "Stand Together". HMD 2020 also marks both 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia. As the HMD Trust says, "Genocidal regimes throughout history have deliberately fractured societies by marginalising certain groups. Now more than ever, we need to 'stand together' with others in our communities in order to stop division and the spread of hatred in our society." ■

Daniel Scharf

Those wanting to join the Path of MADness on **Sunday 26th January 2020** should meet at the **Heritage Centre, Building 103, Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire OX25 5HD** from 10am and the car convoy will set off at about 11am and last about 2hours.

Contact **Daniel Scharf** at: pause.forthought@gmail.com with names and car registrations if you are going and say whether you are wanting to contribute to the memorial service.



Diary

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MONTHLY ALL YEAR: USAF Croughton main gate Quaker meeting 2-3pm (fourth Saturday of the month). Contact: **Elisabeth Salisbury** – **01865 515163**.

January

Wednesday 1st – Faringdon Peace Group social evening.

Saturday 11th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret: 01865 248357

Thursday 16th – Oxford CND meeting, Oxford Town Hall, 6.45pm

Monday 20th – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign meeting.

Tuesday 21st – Abingdon Peace Group meeting, 8.00pm, Northcourt Centre.

Sunday 26th – Path of MADness, Upper Heyford, 10.00-12.00.

February

Wednesday 5th – Faringdon Peace Group, Friends Meeting House, Faringdon SN7 8AQ, 7.30pm.

Saturday 8th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret: 01865 248357

Tuesday 18th – Oxford CND meeting, Oxford Town Hall, 6.45pm

Tuesday 18th – Abingdon Peace Group meeting, 8.00pm, Northcourt Centre.

**Scrapping our
nuclear weapons
could pay for
all A&E services
in hospitals
for forty years.**

www.cnduk.org/ScrapTrident



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Latest News

Middle East tension

US President Donald Trump ordered the death of one of Iran's most powerful leaders, General Qasem Soleimani, a political assassination which risks destabilising the Middle East region even further.

Summary executions are illegal under international law and the killing of Soleimani is a further example of the rejection of international norms that we have witnessed under the Trump presidency.

In 2015 we welcomed a ground-breaking nuclear deal with Iran which heralded improved relations. The deal achieved its central aim: Iran doesn't have a nuclear weapons programme. But Trump saw fit to withdraw from the deal in 2018, taking us a step closer to war. This latest development brings that war closer still.

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Make cheques for 2020 payable to Oxford CND and send to: Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP.

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No later than **Sunday 23rd February 2020**.