



OXFORD CND

NEWSLETTER

May/June 2021



No More Nukes: Time to Scrap Trident now



**"Trident terrorism
with a bigger
budget..."**

The increase in UK nuclear warheads runs counter to the UK's international legal obligation under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to disarm our nuclear weapons.

The government will now consider using nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear threats, including 'emerging technologies' which could mean a cyber-attack.

We should be using our resources to deal with actual problems such as climate change and the pandemic and investing in our NHS, education system and green jobs.

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

We, the Peoples

It is a familiar paradox that as the world becomes more infected by populism, more people feel marginalised. The most populist state leaders are the most authoritarian, or at least they strive to be so. The light thrown into dark corners from time to time, whether it is the cronyism of the current British government, or the covert invention of new nuclear weapons, only seems to highlight our powerlessness. So, we should celebrate those occasions when a genuine popular voice triumphs not only for what it has achieved but because of the way it has come about, and this is particularly true of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). To finally have an international treaty banning the third arm of Weapons of Mass Destruction alongside the two already banned is a huge positive step which puts pressure of a new kind upon the nuclear-weapon states. But to have gained this 'from below', rather than because the major powers decided it was expedient, is just as significant. Here at least 'We, the Peoples' (those powerful first words of the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations) have prevailed.

I am at the moment writing a chapter for a new *Oxford Handbook on Peace History*, which has led me to follow in detail the thread of disarmament negotiations conducted under UN authority since 1945. From one angle it is a very dull tale of one committee after another failing to get results; from another it is a fascinating progression from the tight grip which the major powers kept upon disarmament at the outset, through the growing assertion of the majority voice of UN members, until this reached the level where the TPNW could be negotiated, signed and ratified.

There was tension in the very creation of the UN between the five Permanent Members of the Security Council and the rank and file membership in the General Assembly. How much voice they should have was hotly debated at the founding conference in San Francisco; some concessions were won but at the price of the Council veto. With the UN founded within weeks of the atom bombs in Japan, disarmament was a foremost concern from the start, and the very first resolution of the Assembly called

for 'elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction'. But although the Charter gave the Assembly the power to consider 'the principles governing disarmament and regulation of armaments...', this did not extend to negotiation or decision. A succession of Disarmament Committees, all dominated by the major powers and achieving nothing, followed until the 1960s. But by this time public anxiety over nuclear testing and the nuclear arms race could no longer be ignored, and in 1962 an enlarged Disarmament Committee was formed. This committee became the forum for the negotiations that would lead to the conclusion of

the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1969, by which time it had been enlarged again.

Slow progress in disarmament continued to cause alarm, and in 1978 an entirely new body was created with greater powers – the Conference on Disarmament (CD) – to be regarded as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.

This showed its promise

by concluding in 1992 the Chemical Weapons Convention, and in 1996 the Comprehensive Test-ban Treaty. But its work then stalled, partly because of a lack of unity, while the short-lived enthusiasm of the major nuclear powers for real disarmament – the much talked-of 'peace dividend' from the ending of the cold war – also waned. Activity now shifted to an even broader forum – the NPT Review Conference mechanism with 190 states-based on the 'humanitarian initiative' which led ultimately to the TPNW. Using international humanitarian law as the basis for banning nuclear weapons as illegal was a brilliant way of outflanking the nuclear weapon states. International peace advocacy played a key role, recognised by the Nobel Peace awarded to ICAN. In the words of the Nobel Committee this coalition of NGOs across the world gave 'a new direction and new vigour' to efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons: the challenge now is how to take it forward. ■

John Gittings

UK nuclear warhead numbers and the Integrated Review

<https://www.nukewatch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UK-warhead-numbers-and-the-Integrated-Review.pdf>

This paper is published in the aftermath of the UK government's 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy to help readers interpret statements in the Review relating to UK nuclear warhead stockpile numbers and the announced increase in the warhead stockpile ceiling.

It reviews the recent history of UK government announcements on warhead numbers and compares these with trends observed by Nukewatch UK based on our monitoring of warhead convoy movements over the last decade. We provide an assessment of current UK warhead stockpile numbers based on our observations and conclude that the increase in warhead numbers inferred by the Integrated Review has, in fact, already been largely achieved as a result of a continued build up in warhead numbers over the last five years.

Nukewatch's best estimate is that the UK stockpile already comprises 250 warheads. Historically, AWE's predecessor establishments were able to produce WE177 nuclear weapons at a rate of between 2 and 4 warheads per month over the period September 1966 to April 1977.³⁵ During the period of Trident warhead bulk production Nukewatch considers that warheads were produced at roughly an equivalent rate to this, on the basis of warhead convoy movement records from the 1990s, and similar production rates appear to have been achieved for the Mk4A warhead over the past two years. Assuming production continues at the same rate, AWE should have no problems in bringing warhead numbers up to the 260-warhead ceiling if requested to do so by the government.

Over recent years AWE has experienced well-publicised difficulties in the construction of new buildings to replace ageing manufacturing facilities. Project Mensa, the new warhead assembly / disassembly intended to replace existing facilities at AWE Burghfield, was originally intended to enter into service in 2017 but will not now open until 2023

at the earliest. Another important facility, Project Pegasus, intended to deliver an enriched uranium storage and manufacturing capability, has also been rescheduled and the target for delivery of the first unit produced in Pegasus has been put back from 2019 to 2030 – considered “deliverable, although challenging”. Until these new facilities open warhead manufacturing work can continue in existing facilities, albeit with a certain level of associated risk.

Conclusions

UK government statements on warhead numbers are broadly consistent with Nukewatch UK's observations of warhead movements over the period 2010-2020.

During the first part of the decade (2010 to 2015-16), the UK's warhead stockpile was drawn down to a limited extent. This is assumed to be a move towards meeting the commitment in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review to reduce the warhead stockpile ceiling from not more than 225 to not more than 180 by the mid-2020s.

- A build-up of warhead numbers towards a new ceiling has been underway since 2015-6. This is assumed to be the result of production of new Mk4A warheads. This trend has accelerated over the last two years.

- Assuming a 2010 baseline of 225 warheads, Nukewatch considers that the UK warhead stockpile as of December 2020 stood at between 241 and 305 warheads, with our best estimate as 250 warheads.

- The Atomic Weapons Establishment is in a position to deliver and maintain a stockpile of 260 warheads, although there are long term risks in maintaining an operational stockpile relating to the supply of tritium. The Prime Minister's statement that the figure of 260 warheads is a ceiling, not a target, provides the UK with some cover in the event of any future difficulties in maintaining a stockpile at this level. ■

TEPCO Aims for Cheap & Quick Fukushima Waste Dump in Pacific

The release of more than 1,000,000 tons of radioactive water from Fukushima Dai-ichi was approved recently by the government of Japan. Claiming that these discharges would be harmless, Japan's government said that Tokyo Electric (TEPCO) had no other alternative but to dump highly toxic water into the Pacific.

So, here we go again, just as TEPCO and the Japanese government tried to claim that everything was fine after Fukushima and contended for weeks that there was no meltdown, they are at it again. Now, Japan's government has teamed up with TEPCO once more, covering up the consequences of the extraordinary amounts of radioactivity they plan to unleash upon the world.

No matter what TEPCO and Japan claim, dumping more than one million tons of radioactive liquid into the Pacific is one more death knell to the ocean, to its aquatic life, and to other countries where it will end up.

Such an approach is a blatant disregard for all life on our small and interconnected Planet Earth. And a move like this also sets a legal precedent that will open the door to allow countries worldwide



to decimate the international environment; however, they wish with no limits to whom they hurt or how. TEPCO and the Japanese government would have the world believe that saturating the Pacific Ocean with Tritium and other radioactive isotopes is not harmful

Their latest claim that these releases are harmless and are necessary is based upon three false

premises.

First, it is wrong that TEPCO will remove all the radiation in that water except for tritium. While we note that more than 1,000,000 tons of water have been filtered, those filters cannot capture all the radiation.

The second falsehood is that tritium is harmless. Claiming that tritium is harmless is a willful atomic industry myth to cover up the fact that tritium crosses the placental barrier and can damage babies in utero and how much internal damage it does inside any person or species.

And finally, the third falsehood that TEPCO is running out of land and has no place to put more water storage tanks is a shameless lie. ■

Arnie Gundersen, Fairewinds

More about tritium from Dr Ian Fairlie

At the present time, over a million tonnes of tritium-contaminated water are being held in about a thousand tanks at the site of the Fukushima Daichi nuclear power station.

These problems constitute a sharp reminder that the nuclear disaster at Fukushima did not end in 2011 and is continuing with no end in sight.

- TEPCO / Japanese Government have argued that, as tritium is **naturally-occurring**, it is OK to discharge more of it. The argument that because it exists naturally it's OK to dump more is false

- TEPCO / Japanese Government have argued that it is safe to dump tritium because it **already exists in the sea**. Tritium is there but the holding tanks at Fukushima are typically about a million times more concentrated.

- TEPCO / Japanese Government have argued **coastal nuclear plants routinely dump water**

that contains tritium into the ocean. But Fukushima's tanks hold about a thousand times more.

- **Where is all this tritium coming from?** Most (or maybe all) the tritium will come from the concrete structures of the ruined Fukushima reactor buildings.

- **What about other radioactive contaminants?** Reports are emerging that the tank waters also remain contaminated with other nuclides such as caesium-137 and especially strontium-90.

There are no easy answers here. TEPCO/Japanese Gov't will have to buy more land and keep on building more holding tanks to allow for tritium decay to take place. Ten half-lives for tritium is 123 years: that's how long these tanks will have to last – at least.

This will allow time not only for tritium to decay, but also for politicians to reflect on the wisdom of their support for nuclear power. ■

Nuclear ban – poll shows majority want UK to sign treaty

UK governments have repeatedly insisted that nuclear weapons are the popular choice of the British people. A new poll as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enters into force, shows that to be false.

The TPNW makes nuclear weapons illegal for the first time. It outlaws the development, possession, and deployment of nuclear weapons by signatory states. Their very existence is illegal. In a remarkable development, the Treaty also places obligations on signatories to assist victims of nuclear weapons use and testing, and requires environmental remediation for lands contaminated by nuclear testing. It explicitly recognizes the disproportionate impact of nuclear-weapon activities on indigenous peoples, because of the choices made by nuclear powers for their testing sites. Many of the UK tests were conducted on the Australian First People's territories in Emu Field and Maralinga, contaminating large parts of South Australia. These

historic wrongs must be righted.

The Treaty currently has 51 states parties that will be legally bound by the treaty, and an overall supporter-base of at least 130 countries – over two thirds of the international community – many of whom will be joining the treaty over the coming months and years. Not surprisingly, it is the states of the global south, most of which are already self-organised in nuclear weapons-free zones, that have led the push to get this Treaty into law. They are well aware that any nuclear weapons use by states in the global north will disastrously affect their populations, lands and food production. In their view, any possession of nuclear weapons is unacceptable; no hands are safe hands when it comes to nuclear weapons.

The UK government has consistently rejected the TPNW, boycotting the vote in the UN, and saying that Britain will 'never' sign up to it, but they are at odds with UK public opinion.

A national poll conducted on 12-13th January for CND by Survation, showed the following:

- 59% of the public support the UK government signing up to the TPNW, including 50% of Conservative voters and 68% of Labour voters.
- 77% support a 'total ban on all nuclear weapons globally', including 71% of Conservative voters and 83% of Labour voters.
- Both the UK signing the TPNW and a total global nuclear ban have majority support across every single demographic (age, regions and nations, education level, income bracket, 2019 GE vote, and 2016 EU referendum vote)

This true reflection of public opinion on nuclear weapons is widely articulated, if less widely reported – it's found in the outspoken positions of

many faith leaders, of many trade union leaders, of many campaigns – and in the day to day work of those who want our resources spent on dealing with the pandemic and the climate emergency, not on weapons of mass destruction.

It is shameful that the Westminster parliament so little reflects the opinions of the electorate on this issue. The SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Green Party stand up, and a handful of others, but what of the overwhelming majority? Still in a post-imperial haze? Fearful of new thinking? They need to get beyond nuclear weapons – change is overdue. It's time for us to join the global majority. ■

Kate Hudson



NURSES NOT NUKES



You couldn't make it up: in a country where two million children don't have enough to eat and nurses who've cared for people during the pandemic are forced to use foodbanks, the government is planning to spend tens of billions on getting even more nuclear weapons. According to the Royal College of Nursing, around a third of nurses are considering leaving the NHS because they feel 'under-valued'. And its little wonder when the government is, during a pandemic, offering an experienced nurse a pay rise of just £3.50

Meanwhile, the government's defence spending increase, announced in November last year, will cost £80 billion over four years. That's on top of the billions already allocated and before the huge cost of the new nuclear warheads is factored in. That's why CND held a 'Nurses Not Nukes' online public meetings on 28th April which brought together nurses and healthcare

workers with anti-Trident campaigners to discuss how we can build a Britain where we invest in the NHS, not weapons of mass destruction.

There's a lot to protest about. Top of our list is Boris Johnson's decision to increase Britain's nuclear arsenal – at the same time as saying that nurses can only have a 1% pay increase. He wants to spend public money on more weapons of mass destruction, not doctors, nurses and hospitals. In the process he will be ripping up the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and starting a new nuclear arms race.

So, covid restrictions permitting – please join our 'Nurses not Nukes' bloc on **Saturday June 26th**, assembling at noon at **Portland Place, W1**. We'll march to Parliament Square to show that, after the pandemic, we want a new normal, free from the scourge of nuclear weapons. ■

Join CND 'Nurses not Nukes' bloc on the People's Assembly march – June 26th

The People's Assembly has called a national demonstration in response to the government's shocking mismanagement of the coronavirus crisis. Its pitiful offer to the nurses, the public sector pay freeze, lack of sick pay – all while announcing the first increase in nuclear weapons since the Cold War – makes it very clear that the government doesn't care about the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The Tories are also attempting to use the cover of the pandemic to sneak through the draconian 'Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill'. This

demonstration is an opportunity to stand up for the right to protest.

Join CND's 'Nurses not Nukes' bloc to protest against the government's priorities: oppose the increase in nuclear warheads and support our NHS not Trident message. We will be part of a Peace and Anti-war Bloc with the Stop the War Coalition and will be joined by many other organisations.

Assemble 12 noon at Portland Place, London, before marching to Parliament Square.

Contact: information@cnduk.org with any queries.



CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE

Good news just in! **We're going back to court to challenge the UK government over the supply of weapons for the war in Yemen.**

CAAT has been granted permission for our legal challenge to proceed to the High Court. **Thank you so much for everything you have done to help make this happen.**

For more than six years now UK weapons have been used to tear lives apart in Yemen. Throughout this time the government has continued to promote and protect weapons sales, despite the devastating human cost.

We are determined to put a stop to such sales once and for all.

In 2019 legal action by CAAT forced the government to stop issuing export licences for

weapons that could be used in the war in Yemen. The government was ordered to retake all its previous decisions in a lawful manner.

But in July 2020 the government resumed arms sales, and since then it has licensed more than £1.6 billion additional weapons sales in support of the war.

Our challenge can force change.

Judges will now consider whether the government's decision to resume arms sales is lawful. We hope the case will be heard in the next few months.

The new ruling is an important step forward, increasing the pressure for the UK government to finally end the arms sales fuelling the war in Yemen. This success shows how much we can achieve when we work together to take on the arms trade. ■

2020's global military spending reached 'HIGHEST LEVEL' in decades

Governments around the world have increased their military spending to a level not seen since 1988 despite their economies suffering during the pandemic, a fresh study has said, adding that the US was ahead of the curve again.

Back in 2020, nations all over the world have been struggling to support their economies through the times of hardships and lockdowns caused by the onslaught of Covid-19. Those efforts apparently did not prevent them from spending more money on the military than ever before in more than three decades.

The US, however, still leads the list of the largest military spenders in the world by a wide margin. America's military expenditures alone amounted to 39% of the global defense spending, SPIRI said, adding that the US also recorded one of the highest

spending growth rates among the top 10 military spenders, surpassed only by Germany and South Korea, which have considerably smaller defense budgets.

The US closest "competitor" – China – spent around three times less money on defense and its military spending in 2020 accounted for some 13 percent of the global tally. Beijing did not have to raise its defense spending at the expense of increasing the military burden, since its economy was one of the few still growing in 2020.

India, Russia and the UK also made it to the list of the top five military spenders, although their defense budgets were considerably smaller than those of China, not to mention the US. Saudi Arabia was the only nation among the top 10 military spenders that had its defense expenditures decreased in 2020. ■

Diary

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

May

Wednesday 5th – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting – Prof. Richard Seaford- 7.30pm.

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

Saturday 15th – Oxpeace conference.

Saturday 15th – Leveller's Day online.

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

Thursday 20th – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign Zoom meeting 4pm.

Saturday 22nd – CND online conference 'Working for Peace in the Middle East.'

June

Wednesday 2nd – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting – Fellowship of Reconciliation, 7.30pm.

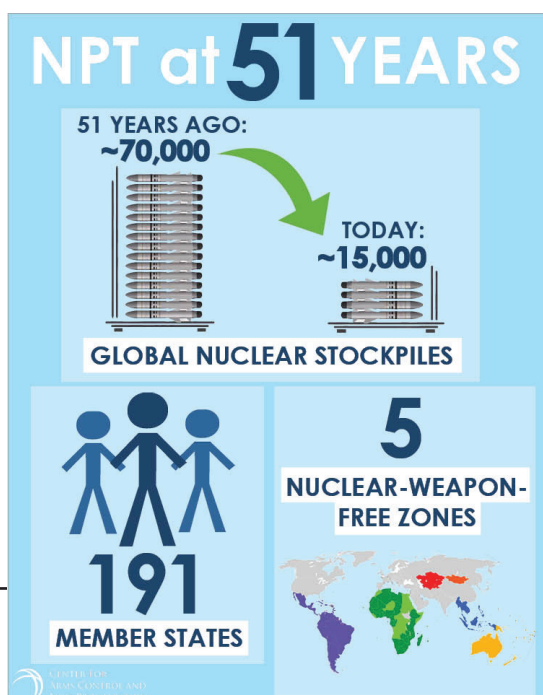
11th-13th – G7, Cardis Bay, Cornwall.

Saturday 12th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret – 01865 248357.

Tuesday 15th – Abingdon Peace Group Zoom meeting, 8.00pm.

Saturday 26th – CND 'Nurses not Nukes' bloc. People's Assembly march – 12 noon, Portland Place London.

Best list of news items, webinars etc:
https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items



Latest News

Netpol's Charter for Freedom of Assembly Rights

Parliament has voted in favour of the police, crime, sentencing and courts bill. This bill would give the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, powers to create laws to define 'serious disruption' to communities and organisations, on which police can then rely to impose conditions on protests. But in a victory for protestors, the next stage of the bill has now been delayed until later in the year after huge opposition.

We need real protections for our protest rights. Read more at: **Netpol.org/Charter**

Membership subscriptions 2021 Please pay your subscription soon!

If you pay your subscription by cheque please can you pay us as soon as possible. Oxford CND needs that money to campaign and send you information and newsletters. We are also very grateful for extra donations. Subs are very reasonable – £10 or £5 low wage, but are essential for us to continue to campaign. Standing orders can continue as before. Make cheques for 2021 payable to Oxford CND and send to: Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP.

Oxford CND Newsletter by email

Some members already receive the Oxford CND newsletter only by email. If you would also like to receive it only by email, contact: **oxfordcnd@phoncoop.coop**

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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Please send letters and items to:
Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP
No later than **Monday, June 21st 2021**