



OXFORD CND

NEWSLETTER

July/August 2022



**AGAINST
NUCLEAR
WEAPONS**



**AGAINST
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WAR**

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

The candle of peace

“It is much easier to make war than to make peace”, said the French Premier Georges Clemenceau in 1919, midway through the Versailles negotiations. Much has been written about whether the first world war could have been avoided, much less about whether it should have been halted at an earlier date, but this is now addressed in a new book by the American historian Philip Zelicow. “Had the war stopped in 1916 [when serious efforts were made to do so]”, he writes, “it would have given way to a scarred bitter peace... But the outlook would have been better. As in a patient ravaged by illness... every further year of terrible warfare lowered the odds for a healthy recovery”.

Parallels are never exact, and there is a big difference between 1916 and today, but it is not a helpful one. Then it was believed that Germany could be defeated, and it was eventually – though it took rather longer than Lloyd George’s fanciful “knock-out blow”. Today’s war party believes that Russia can be defeated, but can any intelligent scenario explain how this may happen? To seek an earlier conclusion in Ukraine today rather than fight to the end may indeed produce a “scarred and bitter peace” – yet the longer it continues, the lower the odds for the future. And, we should add, the higher “the odds” for no future at all.

Realism requires us to acknowledge that at this actual moment neither side is willing to negotiate. After the failure of his mission in late April, the UN Secretary-General concluded that an immediate ceasefire was not on the cards. President Macron and Chancellor Scholz urged a ceasefire in recent talks with Putin, but appear to have shelved that in their subsequent visit to Ki’iv. Yet behind the talk of a long war (particularly loud in the UK where it serves the interests of a corrupt prime minister groping for survival) there is a saner attempt to prepare for negotiations when the time comes. Unreported in the British press, that time has been identified, by the chief Ukrainian negotiator John Arakhamia as potentially in August. Other reports suggest that

autumn is more realistic. Meanwhile Arakhamia and his team are maintaining contact with their Russian counter-parts once or twice a week. In the end, he says, the war will have to end through “compromise”, although he admits that there will be a “domestic backlash” to this.

This points to a wider danger that by the time peace can be negotiated, the “backlash” – not just in Ukraine but in hawkish opinion outside – will make it much harder to achieve. It is not only hawks who will feel unhappy about rewarding Russia by making the sort of concessions that are inevitable in any negotiated deal. We should never lose sight of the simple fact that Russia has

committed multiple aggression under the UN Charter, followed by multiple war-crimes under the Geneva Conventions. The Bucha massacre was a significant factor in bringing the earlier negotiations of March-April to an end, coupled with temporary optimism on the Ukrainian side when Russian forces withdrew from outside Ki’iv.

Yet few now see a decisive end to this war for either side, short of unacceptable and world-threatening escalation. So, the more that we talk about “making peace”, the more that

we prepare to make it, the more we will legitimise its possibility when the time comes. In the early negotiations, and more quietly now between Ukraine’s allies, the shape of a possible settlement was and is discussed. An Italian four-point peace plan, presented to the UN Secretary-General in May, appears to be on the agenda but there will be other plans too. The more one goes into detail, the harder the task, but that is precisely the job of diplomacy.

And our job, in the anti-war community, is to keep talking about peace rather than lapse into a depressed silence. We can urge our MPs to talk more about it too – there needs to be much more serious debate in the House of Commons on how to achieve a peaceful solution. Everything will help to keep the fragile candle of peace from being blown out. ■

John Gittings

AWE submit planning application

AWE has submitted a planning application to West Berkshire Council for a significant new development at the nuclear weapon facility.

Dubbed 'the hub', the complex proposal, which contains research laboratories, office space, engineering workshops, and a learning centre, would be spread over a vast 9.3 hectare area, equal to the size of just over 13 football pitches.

The development's design and access statement says: "The hub development will provide a contemporary and significant work of architecture, whose key objective is to attract world class scientists, researchers, administrators and secure future operations through apprenticeship, learning and teaching spaces." ■

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

At the United Nations in Vienna, States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) concluded the first meeting of the treaty and condemned unequivocally "any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances."

The Vienna Declaration shows that there is this new global alliance that uses the TPNW to push back against unacceptable and illegal nuclear threats and risks of nuclear war. The Action Plan outlines concrete steps this alliance will take to stop nuclear-armed states from using nuclear weapons and to move forward to eliminate them.

The 65 states parties, 86 signatories to the treaty, other supportive states, survivors of nuclear detonations, international organisations, parliamentarians, financial institutions, youth and civil society that are part of this new alliance.

The Vienna Declaration concluded with a clear commitment by these states, that "In the face of the catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons and in the interest of the very survival of humanity ... We will not rest until the last state has joined the Treaty, the last warhead has been dismantled and destroyed and nuclear weapons have been totally eliminated from the Earth."

A colossally expensive nuclear arms race is again underway among the richest militaries in spite of global climate chaos, refugee crises, medical emergencies, and food shortages, all of which must be confronted if want to survive. The world's nine nuclear-armed countries spent \$82.4 billion upgrading their arsenals in 2021, the biggest spender being the United States, according to "Squandered," the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons' ICAN annual report on nuclear spending. ■

Faslane Action for Bomb Ban (FABB)

The Faslane Action for the Bomb Ban (FABB) disarmament camp, which featured XR Peace as well as Ploughshares, protested from 6th to 18th June in advance of a Vienna gathering of state representatives meeting on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Her Majesty's Naval Base, Clyde - commonly known as Faslane - is the navy's headquarters in Scotland, home to the core of the Submarine Service and is best known as the home of Britain's nuclear weapons, in the form of nuclear submarines armed with Trident missiles, and the new generation of hunter-killer submarines.

The Royal Naval Armaments Depot at Coulport, eight miles from Faslane, is responsible for the storage, processing, maintenance and issue of key elements of the UK's Trident Deterrent Missile

System and the ammunitioning of all submarine embarked weapons.

Before the blockade, around 50 protesters sang traditional peace songs, and newer chants over the UN treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. Dancers and singers, banners and protesters were also celebrating the continuation of the Faslane Peace Camp for 40 years while decrying the need for it.

One demonstrator said: "This is the story of Britain's nuclear weapons so-called defence system. Of course, it is offence. It is truly grotesque and awful. It is our money paying for it. It would be so much better spent on the NHS, feeding hungry schoolchildren, or maybe fighting climate change. That is why we are here. That is why we are protesting." ■

Memo on Ukraine Diplomacy

1 The Ukraine war will have to end through diplomacy and negotiations. This has been reaffirmed recently by Ukraine's chief negotiator, David Arakhamia, by NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, and others including President Macron and Chancellor Scholz. [see below for references]

2 Although the conditions to restart negotiations do not seem favourable right now, preparatory ground work is already under way, with little publicity, between Ukraine and its allies to produce a potential framework for a ceasefire.

3 The call for an "immediate ceasefire" has already been voiced by world politicians including the US Defence Secretary and the Chinese and Indian foreign ministers.

4 The UN Secretary-General has received a peace plan from Italy that has been part of current discussions. This looks at critical issues including Ukraine's neutrality, security guarantees, and the future status of Crimea and the Donbass areas.

5 In terms of timing, David Arakhamia has suggested serious negotiations could resume in August. Other forecasts point to the autumn. It should be remembered that there were intensive negotiations in the first weeks of the war, before these stalled.

6 However the general public narrative – particularly in the UK – suggests that the war must and will proceed for a long time until it results in Russia's withdrawal and defeat.

7 This narrative is inspired partly by the Ukrainian desire to maintain morale, and also by questionable optimism that Russia can be defeated. Outside Ukraine it also serves wider geopolitical and (again particularly in the UK) domestic political aims.

8 There is a danger that unless this unrealistic narrative – with its inherent dangers of escalation – is engaged and contested, it will entrench hard-line positions and make it harder to negotiate a ceasefire and peace settlement when this should be possible.

9 It is vital therefore that there should be as much public discussion as possible on how to achieve peace through negotiation, and that those in positions of influence in the media, in government or opposition, in the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies, in foreign affairs think tanks and disarmament NGOs, should take this up.

10 Britain as a permanent member of the Security

Council has a particular responsibility under Article 24(1) of the Charter to work for the maintenance of world peace. So does China, and in spite of UK-China differences, an attempt should be made to engage Beijing in a joint initiative.

11 The UK House of Commons should hold a Westminster Hall Debate as soon as possible to raise parliamentary and public awareness. Britain should seek to mobilise UN support for a new General Assembly Special Session.

12 Issues to be debated and explored include:

a) The modalities of a cease-fire and the demilitarization of front lines – the use of UN peace-keepers should be discussed.

b) The nature and scope of security guarantees for Ukraine's neutrality, and the identity of those offering guarantees (preferably underwritten at the UN).

c) How to clarify the future status of Crimea and separately of Donbas in terms of territorial integrity and freedoms including language rights. The evident difficulties here only underline the need for early discussion and research.

d) How to establish a new EU-Russia relationship that would lead to a withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine and the winding down of sanctions.

23 June 2022 jg40@soas.ac.uk

John Gittings

References: David Arakhamia, Ukrainian chief negotiator

(1) "Ukraine plans to resume peace talks with Russia by August, officials say" 19 June.

(2) Ukraine suffering up to 1,000 casualties per day in Donbas "He said there was domestic backlash to the idea of negotiating with Russia at all after the alleged war crimes in cities like Bucha and Mariupol, but also noted the war would have to end through 'compromise'" 15 June.

NATO Sec Gen Jens Stoltenberg: "So our military support to them is a way to strengthen their hand at the negotiating table when they, hopefully soon, will sit there and negotiate the peace agreement." 13 June.

"Macron and Germany's Scholz urge Putin to hold 'direct negotiations' with Zelensky", 28 May.

Western allies meeting regularly to game out potential framework for Ukraine ceasefire as war hits 100th day, 3 June.

Pentagon chief urges 'immediate' Ukraine ceasefire in call with Russian counterpart, 13 May.

India and China for immediate ceasefire in Ukraine – Indian foreign minister 25 March.

Italy Circulates 4-Point Peace Plan (wsj.com) 20 May.

Obituary

Bruce Kent

It is with great sadness, but deep gratitude for his life and gifts, that Bruce Kent's family announced his death, on 8 June after a short illness. He would have been 93 on 22 June.

At the time of his death Bruce was a Vice-President of CND, a Vice-President of Pax Christi, and Emeritus President of the Movement for the Abolition of War.

After national service in the Royal Tank Regiment and a law degree at Brasenose College, Oxford, Bruce Kent was ordained a Catholic priest for the Diocese of Westminster. Between 1958 and 1987 he served in



Bruce Kent (centre) at Oxford CND stall, Faringdon Peace Fete 2016.

several London parishes, as secretary to Cardinal Heenan, and as the RC Chaplain to the University of London.

It was his Christian faith that brought him to reject nuclear weapons as fundamentally immoral because, even without their use, nuclear deterrence itself depends on a willingness to commit mass murder. As a leading spokesperson for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the 1980s, Kent became well known as a formidable opponent of Margaret Thatcher's defence policy at a time when public opposition to the acquisition of Trident, and Cruise missiles, was escalating.

With his warmth and wit, Bruce Kent was a popular speaker with audiences of all ages from primary schools to pensioners' groups. His commitment to innumerable peace and human rights campaigns over many decades included the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, for the reform of the United Nations, and the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (which came into force in 2021). He was always actively concerned about the welfare of prisoners, especially those maintaining their innocence, and prison reform.

Among his heroes was Franz Jägerstätter, the Austrian farmer who was executed in 1943 for refusing to fight in Hitler's army. As recently as 15 May, Bruce Kent took part in the annual ceremony in Tavistock Square, London, to honour conscientious objectors throughout the world.

He was an Honorary Fellow of Brasenose College, and in the past year was awarded the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism.

Bruce Kent is survived by his wife, Valerie Flessati, his sister Rosemary Meakins, sister-in-law Ruth Kent, and their extensive families. ■

SOME LINKS TO OTHER OBITUARIES

Kate Hudson – <https://cnduk.org/how-bruce-kent-led-cnd-in-the-80s/>

Rebecca Johnson – <https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/tribute-bruce-kent>

Islington Tribune – <https://www.islingtontribune.co.uk/article/bruce-was-tough-clear-unwavering-anti-nuclear-campaigner-dies-aged-92>

MedAct – <https://www.medact.org/2022/blogs/celebrating-bruce-kent/>

Independent Catholic News – <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/44865>

Many of the British nationals had obituaries of Bruce, including *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *The Times*. *The Independent* quotes Kate's comments on Bruce, including his "intolerance for flannel". There is also coverage in *The Tablet*, the *Express & Star*, and *North Wales Pioneer*.

NUKEWATCH

There were 2 nuclear warhead convoys travelling the country in May, and one in June. There was also a Special Nuclear Material convoy travelling from RAF Brize Norton to AWE Aldermaston. All tracked by nukewatchers.

These convoys are the most dangerous cargo on our roads. ■



Above: Nuclear warhead carrier on the A34, Oxford, Tuesday 28th June; Right: Special Nuclear Material convoy leaving RAF Brize Norton, Friday 10th June.

NATO allies to boost high readiness forces to 300,000

NATO allies will boost high readiness forces to “well over 300,000” troops as they strengthen their defences in response to Russia’s war on Ukraine, alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg said.

Allies would bolster some of their battle group formations along NATO’s eastern flank “up to brigade level” – tactical units of around 3,000-5,000 troops – and ratchet up high readiness numbers to “well over 300,000”.

In addition, more heavy weaponry including air defence systems would be shifted forwards and forces pre-assigned to defend specific NATO members on the alliance’s exposed eastern edge.

NATO currently has a high readiness force of around 40,000 troops under its command, but the more than 300,000 troops are expected to form a larger pool that the alliance could tap into in the case of an emergency.

NATO has been building up its forces in the east of the alliance since Moscow first moved into Ukraine with the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

NATO now has eight battle groups across its eastern members and Stoltenberg said some of these – likely in the Baltics and Poland – would be bolstered to “brigade level”. ■

MOD seeks more military spending

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace is urging the prime minister to increase spending on the UK’s armed forces in light of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. He already successfully pushed for higher spending in 2020, but will say that the threat has now changed.

The UK currently spends around 2% of its GDP on defence, matching the target NATO sets for its members. But Mr Wallace has reportedly asked the PM to increase that to 2.5% by 2028. ■

Peace Plaque in Bonn Square

Saturday 6th August, 11.00am

Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing remembered

'Not Once, but Twice – Never Again'

Each August the anniversary of the dropping of the first atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is commemorated across the world. This year, Hiroshima Day, Saturday 6th August, will be marked with a gathering for reflection and commemoration at the Peace Plaque in Bonn Square, Oxford. There is an increasing risk of nuclear war over Ukraine. This conflict also presents a much wider threat: the existential threat of a nuclear war between NATO and Russia. Between them, they have around 12,000 nuclear weapons between them—some 100 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb. The possibility of nuclear war is the greatest for many decades.

There is no possibility whatsoever that war will resolve these complex problems, and it might end with the destruction of humanity. Only dialogue and openness to the concerns of others will make a difference. We urge our government to get all parties to the negotiating table, to secure Russian troop withdrawal, to make the Minsk agreements work and call a halt to NATO expansion. ■

USAF Fairford

Thursday 14th July

Royal International Air Tattoo demo

The Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) is the world's largest military air show, held annually at (RAF) USAF Fairford on the Gloucestershire / Oxfordshire border. The Trade Day is Thursday 14th July when 'special guests', some possibly potential arms buyers, are admitted, and before the very busy public weekend.

USAF Fairford is actually an active USAF base, currently hosting U2 intelligence aircraft, and also hosting periodic exercises by US nuclear-capable B52, B1 and B2 (Stealth) bombers.

Oxfordshire Peace Campaign will hold a banner demonstration at 11.00am for an hour at the roundabout on the A417 at the western edge of Lechlade. The banners will show the true nature of the base to the incoming RIAT campers. You can park in a side road off the roundabout. PLEASE JOIN US. ■

'US Bases out of Europe' Day

Saturday 17th

September 2022

This day will have another national CND gathering at USAF Lakenheath to protest at the upgrade of its US nuclear weapon storage site, which might mean the re-siting of US nuclear weapons in the UK.

We could gather at our local USAF bases, Fairford and Croughton to also mark this day. More later. ■

U.S.A.F. Croughton

March and rally

Saturday 1st – October 2022

Keep Space for Peace week

Speakers – Paul Mobbs (Croughtonwatch), Dave Webb (Global Network) and Tom Unterrainer (CND Chair). This major U.S. communication and intelligence base supports space communications, data links, military drone information, bomber guidance, missile defence, diplomatic communications, and command and control functions. It is a key link in the 'chain' controlling US operations across Europe, Africa and the Middle East. More later. ■



Remember **Bruce Kent**.

Diary

July

Saturday 2nd – Faringdon Grand Peace Picnic – 12.00 noon-4.00pm.

Friday 8th – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign Zoom – 4.00pm.

8th-9th – Aldermaston Women’s Peace Camp – Nuala 01865 749459.

Thursday 14th – RIAT demo, Lechlade 11.00am – 01865 248357 or oxonpeace@yahoo.co.uk

Tuesday 19th – Abingdon Peace Group meeting – 8.00pm.

August

Wednesday 1st – Faringdon Peace Group meeting – 7.30pm.

Saturday 6th – Hiroshima Day gathering, Peace Plaque, Bonn Square, 11.00am.

12th-13th Aldermaston Women’s Peace Camp – Nuala 01865 749459.

Tuesday 16th – Abingdon Peace Group – 8.00pm.

Best list of news items, webinars etc:

https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items

<https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/events>

<https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk>



Latest News

Ministry of Defence: awards £117m to support US Visiting Forces

The contracts, awarded by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), will provide hard facilities management services to United States (US) Air Force bases at; RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall, RAF Croughton, RAF Molesworth, RAF Alconbury, RAF Fairford and RAF Menwith Hill.

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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 2022 payable to Oxford CND and send to: Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP.

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Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

3 Harspichord Place, Oxford, OX4 1BX.
01865 248357 or oxfordcnd@phoncoop.coop
www.oxfordcnd.org.uk

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No later than **Monday, August 22nd, 2022**