

Report of CND Spring Council meeting 1st April 2023

Nigel Day (Oxford CND) and Peter Gloyns (Salisbury CND) attended this meeting, representing the Southern Region of CND. This report is an attempt to provide some feedback to members. If you would like more detail, you are very welcome to contact either of us.

Main contributions

The meeting started by remembering the life of Alice Mahon: 28.09.1937 – 25.12.2022, who was a life long supporter of CND and also a Vice President of CND. <https://cnduk.org/alice-mahon-an-example-to-all/>

Kate Hudson recalled that the Doomsday Clock had moved to 90 seconds to midnight. The Ukraine war looks ever more entrenched with even more funding coming from the US. It is estimated that 250,000 people have died, so far. There are a growing number of calls for peace talks. The announced deployment of tactical nuclear weapons into Belarus was noted and the recent addition of the threat of placing intercontinental weapons there too was flagged. <https://cnduk.org/russian-nuclear-weapons-to-belarus-increases-nightmare-nuclear-risk-warns-cnd/> CND's planned action on 20th May at Lakenheath was highlighted <https://cnduk.org/events/lakenheathmay20/>, as was the unwelcome news of the deployment of depleted uranium weapons to Ukraine <https://cnduk.org/depleted-uranium-the-last-thing-ukrainians-need/>. Belgium has banned DU weapons. The suspension of the New Start treaty was seen as a bad thing, as it may prove an obstacle to the renegotiation of a future replacement treaty, needed when New Start expires. <https://cnduk.org/putins-suspension-of-new-start-a-dangerous-escalation-in-nuclear-risk-warns-cnd/>

There was discussion of the Integrated Defence Review refresh, with the allocation of an additional £5 billion to the defence budget in the next two years. This brings expenditure on the military to 2.25% of GDP in the UK. £3 billion of this increase is earmarked for defence nuclear enterprise. Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity are also areas of expanding activity. A read of the government position document was recommended <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-refresh-2023-responding-to-a-more-contested-and-volatile-world> Under AUKUS, Australian personnel will be trained in the US and possibly the UK. The Australians will build their own submarines, but the reactors will come from the

US or the UK. The subs will be based on the replacement vessels for our current Astute Class submarines, with interoperability being a priority. Dreadnaught, the replacement for our current Vanguard class Trident submarines, has begun production of vessel 3 <https://cnduk.org/warspite-on-the-way/>. There are concerns about long patrols for Trident submarines. Missions used to last 60-70 days but now they are stretched to 150 days, with associated problem for the crews. <https://cnduk.org/accident-fears-as-britains-nuclear-subs-spend-record-time-on-patrol/>

On a positive note, talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia have concluded positively.

David Webb Noted that Virgin's space arm was suffering financial troubles. He also highlighted the DARK project for Wales, which might allow targeting of Russian and Chinese satellites in orbit.

Linda Rogers said that Cymru CND are keeping close to those proposals. <https://nation.cymru/news/plans-for-deep-space-radar-site-in-wales-revealed/> She also reported that the Russian people are being prepared for the use of nuclear weapons. The UK could be a target. We have a first use option for our nuclear weapons and we should demand that the government prepare us for such an attack. Their warmongering is gambling with our lives.

Rae Street pointed out that nuclear power is supported by both political parties. Ian Farlie has good material available to counter this and a conference is planned for later in the year. <https://www.ianfairlie.org/news/uk-2023-budget-no-new-money-for-nuclear/>

Jenny Clegg suggested that the UK's announcement about the deployment of Depleted Uranium weapons was provocative and designed to upset China's peace proposals for Ukraine at the time of the Putin/Xi meeting.

Sue Wright noted that Norwich Council has written to Ben Wallace asking for advanced warning of any return of nuclear weapons to Lakenheath, so that the Council can put in place suitable emergency plans.

Tom Unterrainer said that the national emergency plan was to be tested 23rd April, in which warning messages would be sent to our mobile phones. He also noted growing opposition to AUKUS in Australia, with concerns about who would ultimately control all the nuclear kit? Sophie recommended looking carefully at Paul Keating's presentation on AUKUS

Tony Staunton warned that the arguments against nuclear power within the Trade Union and Environmental movements have not been yet won.

Votes

1. **Non discrimination Policy** document for CND agreed.

2. **Sunak's US visit** - March 2023: implications

1. To continue CND's opposition to the AUKUS pact, with a particular focus on the submarine provision, the increased regional tensions resulting from the pact and any possibility of its expansion, and the risks of nuclear proliferation. Links with trade unions in the UK and Australia that are active on this are to be strengthened as well as cooperation with civil society campaigns in Australia. Dialogue with US organisations is also to be sought.

2. On receipt of the budget figures on military spending, to produce accessible data outlining the impact of the rise on other socially useful public spending and to use the new figures in updated CND materials.

3. To assess and analyse the updated Integrated Review and update any of our materials as necessary.

3. **TPNW - Second Meeting of States Parties**

Recognising that advancing the goal of disarmament in the UK is CND's main purpose, and that the TPNW provides a new global focal point for this purpose, Council resolves: • To ensure that an official CND delegate is sent, in person, to the 2nd Meeting of State Parties of the TPNW in autumn 2023, so that CND's voice might be heard at the decision-making table,

• To ensure that CND parliamentary champions are encouraged to attend the event and fully briefed on CND messaging in advance of attending,

• To provide a full report to Council on CND's engagement after the 2MSP, and

• To run a full campaign asking the foreign secretary to attend the 2MSP, including a meaningful parliamentary engagement component.

Amended

• To ensure that CND parliamentary champions are encouraged to attend the event and fully briefed on CND messaging in advance of attending,

• To provide a full report to Council on CND's engagement after the 2MSP, and asks CND to consider

• To ensure that sending an official CND delegate is sent, in person, to the 2nd Meeting of State Parties of the TPNW in autumn 2023, so that CND's voice might be heard at the decision-making table,

• To consider running a full campaign asking the foreign secretary to attend the 2MSP, including a meaningful parliamentary engagement component.

4. **Peace in Ukraine**

Council:

recalls the words of President John F Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs, that: 'Above all nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war';

welcomes China's 12-point position statement on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis, which acknowledges dialogue and negotiation are the only viable solution to the Ukraine crisis, and includes

• respecting the sovereignty of all countries

• addressing the security interests of all countries • common and sustainable security

• de-escalation to reach a comprehensive ceasefire

• resuming peace talks

• making clear 'nuclear weapons must not be used, and nuclear wars must not be fought'; and

• compliance with the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) to keep nuclear power plants safe

congratulates CND and partners on organising a Peace Talks Now demonstration in London to mark the first anniversary, part of tens of thousands who protested across Europe and North America calling to build the peace; and calls on CND to continue promoting these approaches to resolving the Ukraine crisis.

5. UK-Japan military agreements

Council believes the UK is actively contributing to the destabilisation of the Asia Pacific and exacerbating the risks of nuclear proliferation.

We therefore call on CND to

- inform MPs of these developments by organising a parliamentary meeting;
- highlight these developments in CND responses to the Integrated Review;

- hold a webinar to inform members;’ and
- seek to coordinate activities with Japanese and other international peace groups, for example over the forthcoming G7 meeting in Hiroshima.

6. Online Council Meetings

Proposals will be drawn up for improving the way in which online meetings are arranged. Proposal will be based on the quite extensive discussions held at this meeting.

7. Emergency resolution on **Depleted Uranium Weapons in Ukraine** CND National Council requests:

CND staff to prepare a fact sheet on the dangers of DU weapons and on the consequences of its past use.

CND regions and groups to campaign on this issue in communities and trades unions.

**Prepared for Southern Region
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