



# OXFORD CND

## NEWSLETTER

July / August 2024



### Lakenheath Alliance for Peace

A coalition of 30+ groups dedicated to preventing the return of nuclear weapons to USAF Lakenheath

Peace and a Future  
Not Nuclear Weapons and Destruction

Join us for a peace walk or cycle from Norwich to USAF Lakenheath from 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Camp with us and be at the base every day from 15<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> July 2024



<https://lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk/sign-up/>

SAY NO to NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

01865 749459 oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop

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# Pushing the button

OFFICER X-127 KNEW HE HAD been assigned to work of national significance, but he only learnt what it involved when he descended deep to Level 7 and was informed that he would remain there for the rest of his life. The Push Button officers – he was one – could not be allowed above ground again to tell anyone of their duty: to launch, if and when ordered to, nuclear weapons against the enemy. It was a simple job. Three sets of buttons, four each in graded intensity, which if used to the full could destroy the world. I shall not reveal the conclusion of *Level 7* by Mordecai Roshwald, first published in 1959, but new readers will guess that it does not end well. And science fiction is an inadequate term to describe what J B Priestley, the novelist and early CND campaigner, described as “easily the most powerful attack on the whole nuclear madness that any creative writer has made thus far”, because if it is fiction, it could also become fact.

This is borne out by a new work that blends both: *Nuclear War: A Scenario*, by Annie Jacobsen, which sets out a plausible timeline for nuclear escalation following a hypothetical first strike against the US by North Korea. As in *Level 7*, this scenario also ends very badly indeed (and it is being listed as a work of non-fiction!). Though sixty-five years separate these two books, the underlying reality has not changed, except that there are now more nuclear weapons states than there were then. The moment that the nuclear taboo is breached whether by accident or design, the systems in place combined with the mentality of those in charge of them are likely to lead to the ladder of escalation being inexorably climbed. Nor is there any comfort in the knowledge that the total number of nuclear weapons has declined since the height of the cold war. The US and Russia alone still possess far more than they did in 1959, when they were already sufficient to wreak final destruction.

Both these books, decades apart, reflect the same unwelcome truth: that then and now, we are living in an age of

extreme anxiety over the possibility – perhaps prospect – of a new devastating – perhaps terminal – war. The late 1950s saw, alongside the birth of CND and other movements, a spate of works dealing with nuclear catastrophe, including C Wright Mills’s *The Causes of World War Three*, Nevil Shute’s novel *On the Beach* and many others. Today such a catastrophe is once again a publishable and commentable topic. Jacobsen’s “scenario” appears at the same time as *Countdown: The Blinding Future of Nuclear Weapons* by Sarah Scoles, in which the scientific journalist demolishes the idea that “having nuclear weapons keeps us safe, deterring attacks and preventing radioactive warfare.” And if one Googles “Third World War”, there are plenty of sober discussions by think-tanks and strategists exploring the possibility, and not ruling out the use of nuclear weapons.

The tales told in both *Level 7* and *Nuclear War: a Scenario* illustrate one of the fatal flaws in orthodox “deterrent theory”. This is that effective deterrence requires a nuclear power to adopt the policy of “launch on warning” – that is, to “retaliate” before the presumed weapons of the adversary have arrived. The chances of misperception and/or over-reaction are obvious. The US claims that this policy is only an “option” and not a “doctrine”, but the distinction may be valueless in a time of tension. (Russia is presumed to maintain the same “option”). The stories in both

works also illustrate another dangerous feature: that leaders responsible for the decision to launch nuclear weapons may be pressured to do so. Jacobsen even records a standard term for this, “jamming”, to describe the way in which a flustered leader is pressed by a chorus of military voices insisting that escalatory protocols must be followed.

*Nuclear War: A Scenario* is already a best-seller. *Level 7* is hard to find in print but available cheaply on Kindle. Roshwald went on to write *A Small Armageddon*, in which a nuclear submarine commander “holds the world to ransom” with his weapons. Too far-fetched? Well, yes. But also no. ■

**John Gittings**



# Nuclear weapons spending up

GLOBAL SPENDING ON NUCLEAR weapons is estimated to have increased by 13% to a record \$91.4bn during 2023, according to calculations from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) pressure group.

The new total, which is up \$10.7bn from the previous year, is driven largely by sharply increased defence budgets in the US, at a time of wider geopolitical uncertainty caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war.

All nine of the world's nuclear armed nations are spending more, ICAN added, with China judged to be the second largest spender with a budget of \$11.9bn – though Beijing's total is well below the \$51.5bn attributed to the US.

Russia is the third largest spender, at \$8.3bn, followed by the UK (\$8.1bn) and France (\$6.1bn), although estimates for authoritarian states or the three countries with undeclared nuclear programmes (India, Pakistan and Israel) are all complicated by a lack of transparency.

Susy Snyder, one of the authors of the research, warned that nuclear states are "on course to be spending \$100bn a year on nuclear weapons" and argued that the money could be used on environmental and social programmes instead.

"These billions could have been used for combating climate change and saving animals and plants that sustain life on Earth from extinction, not to mention improving health and education services around the world," Snyder said.

Over the past five years, since ICAN began its research, nuclear weapons spending has soared by 34%, or \$23.2bn. Spending by the US increased by 45% during that time and by 43% in the UK, and on current trends will surpass \$100bn in 2024.

Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, has referred repeatedly to his country's nuclear arsenal to warn the west of a direct military intervention in Ukraine



since launching the full-scale invasion in February 2022. Russia also began a series of exercises simulating the use of tactical nuclear weapons near the Ukrainian border in May.

Other data, compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), shows that the number of active nuclear warheads is also slightly higher, at 9,585, driven largely by China increasing its arsenal to 500 from 410.

The largest nuclear states remain, as they have done since the 1950s, the US and Russia, who possess about 90% of all warheads. Russia has 4,380 nuclear warheads deployed or in storage, compared with the US on 3,708, the researchers added.

The SIPRI researchers said "Russia is estimated to have deployed about 36 more warheads with operational forces than in January 2023," though they added there was no firm evidence that Moscow had deployed any of its nuclear missiles in Belarus, despite public statements from Putin and Belarus's president Alexander Lukashenko.

Britain's nuclear weapon arsenal is estimated to be unchanged at 225 (as is France's on 290), but three years ago the UK said it would raise a cap on the number of warheads it was willing to stockpile to 260 Trident warheads to counter perceived threats from Russia and China.

Wilfred Wan, the director of SIPRI's weapons of mass destruction programme, said: "We have not seen nuclear weapons playing such a prominent role in international relations since the cold war."

He contrasted the numbers of warheads deployed with a joint statement signed by the US, UK, France, China and Russia in 2022. Building on earlier statements, the five countries declared that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". ■

**The Guardian**

## Global Nuclear Weapons Spending in 2023

- China: \$11,850,032,735 - \$376/per second
- France: \$6,060,606,061 - \$192/second
- India: \$2,657,874,340 - \$84/second
- Israel: \$1,090,804,771 - \$35/second
- North Korea: \$856,333,333 - \$27/second
- Pakistan: \$1,011,005,630 - \$32/ second
- Russia: \$8,308,544,638 - \$263/second
- United Kingdom: \$8,058,218,532 - \$256/ second
- United States: \$51,500,000,000 - \$1,633/second



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# Britain spends £12,000 a minute on nuclear weapons

THE LAVISH SPENDING on nuclear weapons would continue under a Labour government.

Britain spends a larger portion of its military budget on nuclear weapons than any other state, a major report just published reveals.

Rishi Sunak's Conservative government is putting 12 per cent of defence expenditure – equivalent to £12,000 every minute – towards the UK's arsenal of at least 225 warheads.

Sunak increased spending on nuclear weapons last year by 17 per cent to £6.5 billion – a greater increase than any other nuclear power except the US.

Over the last five years UK expenditure rose by a staggering 43 per cent. The startling figures appear in new research by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a widely respected group that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

ICAN calculates that Britain is the world's fourth highest spender on nuclear weapons after the US, China and Russia.

## Nuclear Starmer

The group's report comes at a time when the Labour leadership is championing nuclear weapons. The party's manifesto states: "Our commitment to the UK's nuclear deterrent is absolute." This spending commitment is in stark contrast to Keir Starmer's extreme caution when it comes to investing in public services. The party describes the "independent nuclear deterrent" as "the bedrock of Labour's plan to keep Britain safe".

However, it is far from independent. Regular flights from the US carry material that are essential ingredients of Britain's Trident nuclear missile system.

A Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) between Britain and the US enshrines Whitehall's reliance on the Pentagon for essential technology.

The agreement, which is due to be renewed this year, is incorporated in US law. Yet it has no legal status in Britain and has never been the subject of a substantial debate or vote in parliament.

The Liberal Democrats' policy is identical to those of the Conservatives and Labour, saying they will "maintain the UK's nuclear deterrent with four submarines providing continuous at-sea deterrence".

The Scottish National Party has a long record of being opposed to nuclear weapons, which it says are "wrong strategically, morally and financially."

It adds that it supports long-term investment in the Trident submarine base in Faslane as a conventional military base. The Green party says it would "dismantle Britain's entire Trident nuclear deterrent and remove all foreign nuclear weapons from UK soil."

## Corporate subsidies

The ICAN report also shows how companies like BAE Systems and Rolls Royce spend millions lobbying for contracts.

BAE Systems, Britain's largest arms company, received nearly £2.6bn for nuclear weapons-related work. It spent around £3.9m lobbying governments and had 42 meetings with senior government officials last year, according to the ICAN report.

ICAN accuses recent British governments of an "irresponsible lack of transparency" over the cost of the country's nuclear weapons programme.

Trident has been widely estimated to cost more than £200bn over a 30-year lifespan. The Ministry of Defence has not challenged the figure but has never published any estimate of its own.

A recent report by the National Audit

Office warned that the cost of replacing Britain's nuclear weapons system will cost more than £99bn over the coming decade, an increase of more than £38bn in a year.

The ageing Vanguard-class fleet of Trident submarines have had to endure longer than planned patrols because of unexpected technical problems and the plan to replace them with a new Dreadnought-class have been subjected to delays. ■

**Richard Norton Taylor**

Replacing Trident  
£205 billion  
Cost of Social Care  
£11 billion, QED.

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# Lakenheath Alliance for Peace Camp

THERE WAS A CND NATIONAL DAY of action with a 'Stop US Nukes Coming to Britain' day on 11th May. In Oxford campaigners had a stall at Northgate as part of this action (pictured below).

There are advanced plans to deploy new American B61-12 guided nuclear weapons to an upgraded USAF Lakenheath, Suffolk. Infrastructure to house troops and to defend storage facilities and shelters is underway.

USAF Lakenheath is also the home to the USAF's 48th Fighter Wing, the only unit in Europe, which operates both the F-15E Eagle and the F-35A Lightning II fighter aircraft.

The next part of the campaign will be the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace Camp at USAF Lakenheath itself with a start on Saturday 13th July in the centre of Norwich at the Town Hall and a walk/bike over 3 days to USAF Lakenheath and a start to the camp on arrival on Monday 15th July.

There will be inside accommodation as well as camping nearby and a continuous presence at the base throughout until the end of the camp on 25th July. ■

<https://lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk/2024/03/16/sign-up/>



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## Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability (DARC) system

THE US SPACE FORCE want to build three huge radar bases around the world as part of a global system to track objects in deep space. Part of the AUKUS security pact between the US, UK and Australia the radars are to be located in Texas, Australia and Britain. The location of the British site has been disclosed as Cawdor Barracks near Brawdy, just outside the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. If developed the site would include a total of 21 receiving antenna dishes about 60ft (20m) high and 50ft (15m) in diameter and 6 transmitting dishes of the same size, an operations building and perimeter and security fencing.

The powerful radar would be part of a new 'Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability' (DARC)

system, an enhancement to US Space Surveillance Network (SSN) which include the pyramid shaped radar at Fylingdales in North Yorkshire. DARC will be able to 'see' much further into space than Fylingdales and could reportedly detect an object the size of a football up to 36,000 km away. The radar would be used to "detect, track, identify and characterize objects" in Geosynchronous orbit, at 22,000 miles (36,000 km) above the Earth, where a lot of military surveillance and communications satellites are stationed, and would contribute to the US Space Domain Awareness (SDA) programme.

Oxfordshire Peace Campaign campaigns in 'Keep Space for Peace' and will work with Parc Against Dark in future. ■

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# Hiroshima Day



**Tuesday 6th August  
Gather at 11.00am  
Bonn Square**



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## **NUKEWATCH**

TWO NUCLEAR WARHEAD convoys travelled through Oxfordshire in June.

They were monitored and tracked by **nukewatchers**.

They are the most dangerous vehicles on our roads.

- If you see a nuclear weapons convoy on your travels **please let us know as soon as possible**. We need to know what you saw, time and place, and the direction the convoy was travelling in.

Please report any sightings to 0345 4588 365 (North), 0345 4588 364 (South) or 07824 140058.

- Information on our activities can be found on the **Nukewatch** website at [www.nukewatch.org.uk](http://www.nukewatch.org.uk), and on Facebook and Twitter. ■





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# NO TO NATO leafletting

IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST from the International No to NATO Campaign to send in photos of protest events from all over the world to mark with unease, the anniversary of the setting up of NATO, quite a few of us gathered to leaflet.

A peace woman from Finland, Ulla Klotzer, had talked in a brilliant but worrying interview about NATO's encroachment in Finland where there is a 1000-mile border with Russia. The war on the Ukraine has only benefitted one entity – NATO – which now has many new member states and 15 military US/NATO bases in Finland. NATO has now broken the Minsk agreement set up under Gorbachev, where NATO wouldn't encroach towards Russia if the end of the separation of Germany and the Cold War, was agreed.

This anti-ballistic missile treaty with a Nordic nuclear free zone, was reneged on in the most cavalier way and Russia basically was informed when it expressed concern, that it was none of their business.

The international crowds that passed us by on Cornmarket showed a great interest and often support for our concern. When I was talking with one woman about the provocation of the 6 weeks of B52s and B1s over-flying the Black and Baltic seas for over 6 weeks in the September before the Russian invasion, one woman said, "Yes, I heard them!"

It turned out that she lived in the Crimea. When I asked where her national allegiance lay, she said without hesitation, "Russia".

The B52 bombers are overflying Russia's neighbouring seas again as I write this.

## DANCING AT THE ALDERMASTON WOMEN'S CAMP

Many of the usual Aldermaston women were not sure how they felt about a group of dancers coming under the aegis of Greenham Women Everywhere to put on a commemorative dance at the present camp at the Aldermaston Nuclear Weapons factory.

As a result, we were a little thin on the ground last month, but the average age fell dramatically! 8 young dancers, mostly Spanish, came along and set up a revolving 12-foot diameter stage in front of the nearby gate. Di McDonald sent a brilliant line of bunting which Juliet threaded through the gates. The MOD were slightly worried that we might use the stage to leap over the fence, but Juliet

reassured them.

The audience sat in a line of camping chairs facing the stage and gate and the positive tooting which is happening more and more, these days, as people pass the beflagged and bannered roundabout, increased. I think they thought we were blockading the base, which we were doing in a way.

We had a great time and it is heartening to notice the increasingly approving reaction of the locals who at one time were so opposed to us being there.

## OUR OXFORD EAST MP IS PREPARED TO PRESS THE NUCLEAR BUTTON!

With such a short lead up to the snap election called by Rishi Sunak, I thought we needed to invite the various candidates to our monthly slot at the Town Hall to what turned out to be the most comprehensive hustings for Oxford East Parliamentary seat.

People from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign agreed readily to join us in setting up the hustings on the theme of Peace and the Environment.

The sitting MP for Labour, Anneliese Dodds, agreed to be there and most of the other candidates. Amir Steve Ali for the Independent Party accepted the invitation but, in the end, had to send his apologies.

Ahmed Murad from OPSC and I had agreed to share the chair and the meeting was very civilised but with strong opinions and many pertinent questions. Theo Jupp for the Lib Dems was clear about his party's policies. Brendan, a young man, was unconfident at first but spoke the most cogently by the end.

Ms. Dodds, said that she must be honest and admit that she would press the nuclear button. She gave her reasons as that there were many problem countries such as Iran.

Sushila Dahl for the Green Party was quite clear from the beginning about her opposition to nuclear weapons and was shocked that Ms. Dodds should be prepared to kill people from Iran.

We would urge OCND members in Oxford East and West to check on the different party's policies on Nuclear Weapons before voting and to vote on principles this time, at this point **where the nuclear clock is so near to midnight**, rather than tribally. ■

**Nuala Young**



# Diary

**Every Saturday 2 to 3pm  
Women in Black at the Martyrs'  
Memorial**

## July

**Wednesday 3rd** – Faringdon Peace Group.

**Tuesday 9th** – Spacewatch launch.

**Wednesday 10th** – Oxford CND meeting Town Hall, Jury Room – 7.30pm.

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

**13th** – Lakenheath Peace Camp start march Norwich Town Hall.

**15th** – Lakenheath Peace Camp until 25th.

**13th** – CND Council.

**18th-21st** – Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) – USAF Fairford.

## August

**Monday 1st** – Oxford CND leafletting 12.00 noon Cowley Centre, 4.00 St Michael, Northgate.

**Tuesday 6th** – Hiroshima Day – 11.00am Bonn Square.

**Wednesday 7th** – Faringdon Peace Group meeting.

**Friday 9th** – Abingdon Peace Group Nagasaki Day candle floating.

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

## Best list of news items, webinars etc:

[https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news\\_items](https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items)

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

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



## Latest News

### Arms sales at RIAT 2023 USAF (RAF) Fairford

VIA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, *Private Eye* has seen notes for Foreign Office minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan's visit to July 2023 Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. Despite being heavily redacted, the "official-sensitive" document still makes it clear she was there on arms export business. The notes say the event is "a valuable chance for you to explore future opportunities for defence and security exports to the Indo-Pacific, and to support broader HMG (His Majesty's government) priorities in the defence sector".

The notes reveal that Trevelyan was "invited to the Babcock, Boeing and Airbus chalets". The preparatory note for her lunch with Babcock say Trevelyan should tell the firm she is "keen to understand" its "view of opportunities for systems and equipment exports", and should ask "how can the UK government help?" with these exports. The document notes that Babcock has already sold a military communications system to Australia so is well placed for more "defence and security exports in the Indo-Pacific".

**Extract from *Private Eye*, 7th-20th June 2024**

### Membership subscriptions 2024

#### For details of Bankers Orders

**e-mail: [liztaylor@virgin.net](mailto:liztaylor@virgin.net)**

**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 2024 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 like to receive the newsletter online please let Liz Taylor, the membership secretary know on:

**[liz.taylor5@virgin.net](mailto:liz.taylor5@virgin.net)**

### Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Please contact: Nuala Young  
**[nualayoung@hotmail.com](mailto:nualayoung@hotmail.com)**



### Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:

Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP

No later than: **Sunday 25th August 2024**