



OXFORD CND

NEWSLETTER

July/August 2018



March against Trump!

Thursday 12th July
Blenheim Palace – 5.30pm
(See page 7)

Friday 13th July
Oxford coach to **Chequers** and then to **London** demo – **9.00am**
Book on: oxfordstanduptoracism.org.uk/bookings/July13.html
Tel: **0750 3169657**

Friday 13th July
Assemble Carfax/Cornmarket **Oxford 5.30pm**

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Former nuclear sub commander pleads with Government to scrap Trident or risk a “nuclear annihilation abyss”

Trident must be scrapped to prevent humanity tipping “over the edge into a nuclear annihilation abyss”, a former nuclear submarine commander has said.

In a significant move, Rob Forsyth, who commanded nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered submarines in the 1970s for the Royal Navy, now thinks that Westminster’s case for keeping Trident on the Clyde is practically, legally and morally indefensible.

The notion that the UK has an independent nuclear deterrent is “no more than national hubris” and conventional military capability is being “sacrificed” to preserve Trident, he said.

Forsyth retired from the Royal Navy in 1980 to pursue a career in industry, but from 1972-74 he was second in command on the nuclear-armed Polaris submarine, HMS Repulse, for four patrols, one of which he was in charge of because the commander was ill.

He was promoted to commander in 1974 and captained the nuclear-powered but conventionally-armed hunter-killer submarine, HMS Sceptre, from 1977-79. Now 78, he lives in North Oxfordshire.

In a recent critique of the UK’s nuclear weapons policy for the latest issue of the defence magazine, *Warships International Fleet Review*, Forsyth revealed that before his first Polaris patrol in 1972, he formally discussed and agreed with his commanding officer that firing nuclear missiles in response to a nuclear attack was lawful. However, according to Forsyth the policy has since changed so that the UK no longer rules out a nuclear first strike. Westminster’s policy was now “deliberate uncertainty as to when and how the UK’s nuclear missiles would be used”, he said.

Speaking to the *Sunday Herald*, Forsyth pointed out that the UK Government had attempted to stay within the law by adding riders exempting nuclear weapons from the international Geneva Conventions preventing the use of weapons of mass destruction. “This deeply shocked me,” he said.

“Trident is no longer a weapon of last resort to be used in extreme circumstances such as defence of the homeland. Present policy includes potential first use against rogue states if they ever used



A Trident submarine, armed with its deadly cargo, sets out to sea.

chemical or biological weapons against troops in the field. The general public are not aware of this.”

Forsyth pointed out that Trident is very dependent on shared US facilities. “I cannot conceive Britain would ever fire its Trident missiles without the Americans’ political support and, if they so wished, I am fully confident they would find a way to frustrate the UK,” he said.

“The Government assertion that the UK operates an independent deterrent is no more than national hubris.”

Some £2 billion a year is spent on ensuring that one of the four Trident submarines based at Faslane on Gareloch is always on patrol to ensure a Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD), he said, adding: “The UK’s conventional war-fighting capability is being sacrificed to preserve its nuclear one. Some serious questions need to be asked and answered by the national political and military leadership about not only the affordability of CASD, but also its necessity at all and/or – if it is retained – the moral context of its use.”

He called for CASD to be abandoned because “there is no threat that justifies such an aggressive posture at present”, and said the UK “should offer to cancel the Dreadnought submarine programme as a significant bargaining tool in multilateral negotiations.”

Forsyth also argued that the UK should stop ignoring the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons agreed by 122 countries in July 2017. “This would demonstrate to the rest of the world that the UK is taking

multilateral disarmament seriously – for the first time in more than two decades,” he said.

He criticised Prime Minister Theresa May for suggesting in 2016 that anyone who failed to support Trident was a traitor. “I would suggest that is far from being the case,” he said.

“This patriot – who has served at the coal face of the at-sea deterrent – is merely asking the UK’s leaders to start thinking hard about the nation’s strategic choices and introduce some bold moves. The UK would be showing true global leadership at a time when the whole of humanity could so easily topple over the edge into a nuclear annihilation abyss.”

Forsyth told the *Sunday Herald* how he had come to change his mind about nuclear weapons. “Since commanding a nuclear missile capable submarine the 1970s I have thought hard and learnt much about Britain’s role today as a nuclear-armed nation,” he said.

“What I have found out has convinced me that we now ought to rethink whether we need a nuclear deterrent. We should make clear we will not fire first, take Trident submarines off



Towards a global nuclear ban treaty

continuous patrol and be prepared to trade in our nuclear weapons as our contribution to multilateral disarmament.”

Last week more than 40 campaigners under the banner of Trident Ploughshares chained themselves to the railings outside the Houses of Parliament in London. They demanded that the UK Government sign the nuclear ban treaty to get rid of “these horrific weapons” and “denuclearise the world”.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) stressed that it was committed to creating conditions where nuclear weapons would no longer be necessary to guarantee security. The UK has benefited greatly from the long-standing collaboration on nuclear deterrence and nuclear propulsion with the US, it said.

“Our nuclear deterrent is fully compliant and compatible with our international treaty and legal obligations. The use of nuclear weapons – like all weapons – would be subject to the requirements of international humanitarian law,” said an MoD spokeswoman.

It was “naïve to imagine that unilateral disarmament by the UK would change the

calculations of nuclear states, or those regimes seeking to acquire nuclear weapons,” she argued.

“The UK’s independent nuclear deterrent will remain essential to our security today, and for as long as the global security situation demands. It is designed to deter against the most extreme threats to our national security and has deterred these threats for nearly 50 years.”

She added: “The Defence Secretary has launched the modernising defence programme to strengthen our armed forces in the face of intensifying threats and the UK maintains the biggest defence budget in Europe.”

The voices backing Forsyth

Forsyth’s intervention was welcomed by nuclear disarmament campaigners. The Westminster government was accused of performing a “dance macabre” and “holding the world to ransom at the threat of nuclear annihilation” by SNP MSP Bill Kidd, co-president of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

“Rob Forsyth is one of a growing number of former generals and commanders of the UK’s nuclear arsenal who are calling for an end to Trident and CASD as they are inherently dangerous, wasteful of huge sums of public money and completely useless in military terms.”

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its work on the UN nuclear ban, also backed Forsyth. “He shows bravery in speaking openly what many in our defence services say privately,” said ICAN founding president Dr Rebecca Johnson.

“Replacing Trident is an expensive vanity project that does nothing for UK security, while stealing resources from the equipment and jobs that are needed for security and deterrence in today’s real and complex world.”

Arthur West, chair of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (SCND) said: “Mr Forsyth is to be commended for pointing out the importance of the global ban treaty in moving towards a world free of the dangers and hazards of nuclear weapons. ■

Rob Edwards
***Sunday Herald*, 24th June 2018**

Nuclear Power

Flamanville 3 reactor fiasco

The third reactor at the Flamanville nuclear power plant in France has been under construction since December 2007, but has consistently raised safety issues including weakness in the steel used in the reactor. It was supposed to be the flagship for the European Pressurised Reactor or EPR. Costs have escalated over the years and construction has been delayed significantly. The most recent problem has been with welds on the piping that connects the steam generator and the turbines to produce electricity. Discovered in April this year, inspection shows that at least 35% of these 150 welds have defects. EDF, the Flamanville operator, announced in late June that the start-up date has now been postponed to summer 2019, with the cost rising to at least \$12 billion. By June 2018, Flamanville was seven years behind schedule with its costs tripling. EDF's debt is now around \$71.5 billion and still no electricity produced.

Bananas more fatal than Fukushima?

A pro-nuclear group called 'Nuclear for Climate' has been promoting their views by stating that bananas are more radioactive than living near a nuclear power plant for a year. Their premise is that the potassium contained in bananas is harmful to people and equates to dangerous man-made radionuclides such as cesium-137 and strontium-90, released into the environment from nuclear power facilities, atomic bomb tests and accidents like Fukushima and Chernobyl. The human body is able to get rid of any excess potassium from bananas, but the man-made radionuclides can irradiate people from within, staying in bones and muscles, leading to serious health problems.

Campaigners highlight deadly nuclear fuel processing

Janine Allis-Smith and Martin Forwood of CORE, Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment, have dedicated over three decades challenging operations at Sellafield nuclear power plant. They suspected that radioactive discharges from Sellafield were contaminating local beaches and tide pools popular with children, causing unexplained deaths of young people as well as different types of cancer. The discharges into the Irish Sea have made it one of the most radioactively contaminated bodies of water in the world.

Over the years, the couple has campaigned on a range of issues connected with nuclear power.

In 2017 they received the Nuclear-Free Future Award in the category of Education.

Arlit, the impoverished uranium capital of Africa

Arlit in Niger, located in one of the Sahel's most remote regions, has been an important source of uranium since 1968 for supplying the French nuclear industry. Around 150,000 tonnes of uranium have been extracted by Orano, previously Areva, the multinational company. Niger has failed to see any benefits from supplying the uranium, being one of the world's poorest and least developed countries with nearly half of its 20 million population living below the poverty line.

A 2010 Greenpeace study estimated that 270 billion litres of water had been used by the mines over the years, draining a fossil aquifer more than 150 metres deep. The depletion of these ancient water reserves has contributed to desertification and the drying up of vegetation. Water in Arlit is both scarce but also contains levels of uranium at ten to a hundred times over the World Health Organization's recommended safety standards.

The mining industry also produces huge amounts of toxic waste and hills of debris have built up containing both radioactive substances such as radium, polonium, arsenic and poisonous radon gases. While spokespeople for the company say that the radioactive waste is dispersed, both Greenpeace and the French Commission for Independent Research and Information on Radiation confirm that radioactive dust can be spread hundreds of kilometres away. Also radioactive rubble is being used for landfill or building roads or houses.

Many Arlit residents suffer a range of health problems relating to the mining and the only hospitals in Arlit are run by the Orano company with all the medical staff on the company payroll.

Soon the uranium reserves will be depleted with the company pulling out of the area but leaving all the pollution and poverty. They are only moving about 80 kilometres away to a new mine, Imouraren.

The uranium is then shipped to one of the 58 French nuclear plants to provide power, thousands of miles away from Arlit, whose residents are suffering every day, forgotten. ■

Susan Tibbles

Global Conference to Resist the Nuclearization and Weaponization of Space



The 2018 'Global Conference to Resist the Nuclearization and Weaponization of Space' was held in Oxford by the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. The hosts were Oxfordshire Peace Campaign, the joint grouping of Oxford CND, Faringdon, Abingdon and Kidlington Peace Groups and other local supporters, who are part of the Global Network.

The US has long maintained that it will be 'Master of Space' and deny other nations 'access to space'. Russia and China obviously opposed to this provocative and destabilising plan, have repeatedly gone to the UN urging the US to join them in negotiating a global ban on all weapons in space. The US refuses so Moscow and Beijing have countered US dreams of 'full spectrum dominance' with military space technologies of their own. A dangerous new arms race in tem space is underway.

The US alone can't pay for it's high-tech programme, so is pressuring NATO members to make larger contributions to the ever-expanding alliance, and to spend more on their national aerospace industries that are then connected to the Pentagon. The US is also increasing testing and production of new generations of space nuclear power devices.

All of these topics were discussed at the conference. There was a particular focus on the nearby USAF Croughton communication and intelligence base, which is being dramatically upgraded by the Pentagon to serve as a focal point in the US global surveillance network. Croughton

handles a huge proportion of US military communications in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East and is used to route vast amounts of data captured by Washington back to America for analysis by the CIA and the NSA. A secure fibre-optic link between Croughton and the US air base at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti helps to co-ordinate US drone strikes over Yemen. The US is spending over £200m to transform USAF Croughton into one of its largest intelligence hubs outside the US to also become a new centre for counter-terrorism operations in Africa. The new Joint Intelligence Analysis Centre (JIAC) will be built at the base.

There were plenary panels with reports from delegates from around the world, and a series of workshops 'Tying the Global Space System Together' covering armed drones and bases, Europe's military satellites, resisting through the courts and military bases. The keynote speeches were on the 'Global Military Infrastructure', 'Space Colonisation' and on the work of ICAN. The delegates also visited USAF Croughton to see and hear about the developments there.

The Global Network 'Peace in Space' plaque award was given to Oxford Peace Campaign in recognition of their steady and important work around USAF Croughton.

The theme for the next annual 'Keep Space for Peace' week (6th October at Croughton) will be the 'Space Force'. (Trump has recently announced this formation in the US armed services.)

The 2019 Global Network conference will be held in Moscow, with a side-trip study tour to Crimea. ■



Oxfordshire Peace campaigners at Levellers Day 2018 with one of Maureen Wilskers' banners

Parliament lock-on

45 peace campaigners locked on to the railings outside Parliament on Wednesday 20th June with 40-50 supporters nearby.

Three Oxfordshire women (pictured right) joined others to highlight the fact that the UK is refusing to enter into multi-lateral talks to begin the urgent process of eliminating nuclear weapons.

They supported the current talks on the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. 122 countries have supported this Treaty. 58 countries have signed the Treaty intending to ratify it later. Only 50 states need to ratify the Treaty for it to become law.

So far, the UK, which could play a leading role, has refused to be present at the many preparatory round of negotiations. ■



General Synod of the Church of England

Saturday July 7th, 12.45 pm – Christian CND Fringe meeting

Elizabeth Minor, ICAN, will speak & answer questions on the UN Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) ('Ban Treaty') – Now one year old! 58 countries signed, 10 ratified. 50 ratifications expected by late 2019 to make the Treaty UN law and nuclear weapons illegal.

The General Synod of the Church of England in York debates 'The Ethics of Nuclear Weapons' on Sunday July 8th, 5.45 pm.

Sunday evening Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford will open the debate on:

'That this Synod, mindful that a faithful commemoration of the centenary of the 1918 Armistice must commit the Church afresh to peace building; and conscious that nuclear weapons, through their indiscriminate and destructive potential, present a distinct category of weaponry that requires Christians to work tirelessly for their elimination across the world: (a) welcome the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the clear signal it sends by a majority of UN Member States that nuclear weapons are both

dangerous and unnecessary; (b) call on Her Majesty's Government to respond positively to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by reiterating publicly its obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty and its strategy for meeting them. This is near to saying we should join it, i.e. have a plan for getting rid of our nuclear weapons but still under Article VI. of the NPT.

And (c) commit the Church of England to work with its Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners in addressing the regional and international security concerns which drive nations to possess and seek nuclear weapons and to work towards achieving a genuine peace through their elimination.' This looks as if it might be going to work internationally.

With this Motion the Church of England could join the majority of Churches world-wide and make a significant contribution to the 'elimination of all nuclear arsenals'.

Like the Methodists & Church of Scotland it actually welcomes the Ban Treaty(TPNW). ■

**Caroline Gilbert
Christian CND**

Oxford CND Benefit Concert

Many thanks to **Nick Gill** and the **Oxford Classic Jazz Band**, who again so generously gave us all a delightful benefit concert evening, with guest star Holly singing and the Lindi-Hop dancers leading many to dance the night away!



INVITATION TO THE PARTY, ALDERMASTON WOMEN'S PEACE CAMP

Saturday 11th August, 4.00pm until late, all women welcome

Bring your tent and sleeping bag, some food and drink to share,
to Paices Hill, Aldermaston, RG7 4WP.

For more information contact: **07946 676761**

I will have 4 seats in the car from Oxford, contact me on:

01865 248357 if you would like a lift.

Margaret Downs



TRUMP protest

Blenheim Palace

Oxford Stand Up To Trump!

**Thursday 12th July
Blenheim Palace**

5.30pm

Main entrance going into
Woodstock A44

No 7 bus from B1 stop in
George Street departs 4.57 –
and then every half hour to
Woodstock



Diary



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

July

Saturday 7th – Faringdon Peace Group, Grand Peace Fete, Clock House, Coleshill, B4019, between Faringdon and Highworth, 2.00pm.

Saturday 7th – Oxford CND stall at Grand Peace Fete, Coleshill.

Wednesday 11th – Protector drone arrives from US at USAF Fairford for airshow.

Thursday 12th – Protest Trump demo at Blenheim Palace, main gate, 5.30pm.

Friday 13th – Protest Trump demo Oxford coach 9.00am – Chequers then London demo – book coach seats: 07503169657

Friday 13th – Protest Trump, Carfax, Oxford, 5.30pm.

13th-15th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret – 01865 248357

Saturday 14th – CND Council, London.

Saturday 14th – Network of Oxford Women garden party, Friends Meeting House, St. Giles.

Monday 16th – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign meeting, The Mitre, 2.30pm.

Tuesday 17th – Abingdon Peace Group meeting, 8.00pm, Northcourt Centre.

Thursday 19th – Oxford CND meeting, Oxford Town Hall, 6.45pm

Saturday 21st – Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace House, Paradise Street, 10 year anniversary, Chris Cole speaker, 4.00-6.00pm.

August

Wednesday 1st – Faringdon Peace Group, Friends Meeting House, Faringdon SN7 8AQ, 7.30pm.

10th-12th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret – 01865 248357.

11th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp party – Margaret – 01865 248357 (see page 7 for more info).

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

Saturday 18th – Elder Stubbs Festival – Oxford CND stall.



Latest News

Trump orders creation of US Space Force as military branch

US President Donald Trump has ordered the Pentagon to begin establishing a Space Force as the sixth branch of the US military – *"It is not enough to have American presence in space. We must have American dominance in space,"* Trump declared. He directed that preparations begin for making the Space Force a 'separate but equal' branch of the US military,



alongside the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. Satellites offer the prospect of preclusive defence against missiles through control of access to space, and are key to (among other things) efficient operation of ground-based missile defences.

The president said his new national security strategy recognizes that space is a theatre of war, and he was aiming at ensuring American supremacy in space.

Oxford CND Newsletter by email

Some members already receive the OCND newsletter only by email. If you would also like to receive it only by email, contact: oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop

Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to: Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP No later than 24th August 2018.

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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

Membership subscriptions 2018 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 2018 payable to Oxford CND and send to: Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP.