



OXFORD CND

NEWSLETTER

November / December 2024



SAY NO TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**STOP U.S. BRINGING
NUCLEAR WEAPONS
TO USAF LAKENHEATH,
SUFFOLK**



**WORKING TOGETHER
AGAINST THE
DESTRUCTION OF OUR
WORLD BY NUCLEAR WAR
FOR A FUTURE OF PEACE**

**JOIN LAP!
SIGN UP!**



Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (LAP) is a coalition of 40+ groups dedicated to peace. Join LAP and together we can stop nuclear weapons coming to Lakenheath.

Join us at the main gate to USAF Lakenheath:

- > at monthly vigils 12pm-2pm on the last Sat of every month (except December)
- > International Peace Camp from 14th to 25th April 2025

lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk



Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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The World has a Voice

IF WE LOOK AT THE WORLD today only through the lens of what is mainly reported, we might conclude that we have reached – just forty years late – the picture painted by George Orwell in *1984*. For Oceania, read the United States and an alliance system based on its doctrine of super-power exceptionalism. For Eurasia read the former Soviet Union, now reduced to Russia (plus Byelorussia) but with Putinist ambitions to expand. And for Eastasia, read China with its own unclear but unsettling ambitions in the region.

Two destructive wars, and one potential one – the Middle East conflagration, Ukraine, and Taiwan – are associated with each of these three powers. And let us hope against hope that in a few days' time, there will still be only two, not three dictators, in charge of them.

Yet Orwell's dystopian picture though not so far from the truth is different in a critical way. In the political geography of *1984*, most of the world was parcelled out between the three super-states, and the rest of the world was disputed territory over which they were perpetually fighting for control. Today, the pattern is much more complicated: the "rest of the world" has its own voice and voices, its own interests, demands and economic strengths.

The three "great powers" (China describes itself as one, the US takes it for granted, and Putin's Russia seeks to restore the status) are not so great after all, although they still have enormous destructive potential. World diplomacy may seem to be dominated by the discourse and contention between Washington, Moscow and Beijing, but the larger world has its own voice.

This has led me, in a recent talk at the very successful MAW conference in September on "Alternatives to War in a Troubled World", to consider the attributes of what I call "world voice diplomacy" – rather than "world diplomacy". The anti-war movement and other campaigns for social and economic justice are part of that voice, but we have to find ways of making it louder. Here, briefly, are three areas where I suggest we could do so.

First, we need to **reflect and amplify the**

role of the United Nations as a bridge between the voice of world civil society and the conduct of international diplomacy. We need to remind and hold to account our government of its commitment to the Charter. Beyond this, we need to pressure our politicians and media to actually listen to what the UN is saying, and not only when it suits their purpose. For example, the proceedings of the *Summit of the Future*, held in New York in September 2024, have been largely ignored. (We should note however the final text of the Pact for the Future was watered down by states less committed to peace).

Second, we need to find more and better ways of **connecting the lines between the existential risks that the world faces** -- the threat of nuclear extinction, the inability to halt climate change, the danger of a new and even

more lethal pandemic, and the unpredictable consequences of AI. Government attention to them varies but in no case is enough. We face the obstacle of vested interests, and also a deeper human instinct to maintain an "optimism bias". Against this, there are huge efforts by civil society through campaigns and organisations to raise awareness of these multiple risks and hold governments to account.

Efforts are made to link these campaigns but we need to do more to bring these forces together.

Third, we need to **transform the way that our governments prioritise policy decisions**. The top priority should be the interests of future generations: the current generation may survive, but the odds shorten for those who come after. The principle that all people are of equal moral worth should apply as much to future as to current generations. The UN Declaration on Future Generations includes the proposal to hold a five-year review and to appoint a UN Special Envoy for Future Generations. Wales already has a Commissioner and the UK as a whole, needs to take similar action.

The world has a bigger voice than is usually heard: we should be its sounding board. ■

John Gittings



SAY NO!

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

returning to USAF Lakenheath

OXFORD CND meeting
7pm Thursday November 14th
Oxford Townhall

ALL WELCOME

To launch the campaign to raise awareness
and plan for the April 2025 action



USAF Lakenheath modernisation

NATO RECENTLY BEGAN its annual tactical nuclear weapons exercise Steadfast Noon in Europe. Flight operations are focused over the North Sea and surrounding countries including Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. NATO says a total of eight bases are involved.

The exercise coincides with major upgrades underway at most of the nuclear bases in Europe. This modernization involves security upgrades to the underground vaults that store the U.S. nuclear weapons, underground cables and nuclear command and control systems, and facilities needed for the new F-35A nuclear-capable fighter-bomber.

Several of the nuclear bases in Europe have recently seen construction of a special loading pad for use by the US C-17 aircraft that transport nuclear weapons and service equipment.

The most significant new development is the return of the US nuclear mission to RAF Lakenheath, the home of the US Air Force 48th Fighter Wing with F-15E and F-35A fighter-bombers. The base previously was a major nuclear base with 33 underground storage vaults and over 100 nuclear bombs; but in the mid-2000s the USAF withdrew all nuclear weapons and the nuclear mission was mothballed.

That began to change in 2022 when RAF Lakenheath was quietly added to the list of bases undergoing nuclear upgrades. Although the Pentagon tried to remove evidence of the change, other documents made it clear that the nuclear mission was returning. Satellite images of construction at RAF Lakenheath indicate that approximately 22 of the 33 protective aircraft shelters with underground WS3 vaults are involved in the nuclear upgrade.

It is unclear if nuclear weapons will return to RAF

Lakenheath or the upgrade is intended as a backup to increase flexibility and reduce vulnerability of the tactical nuclear weapons posture in Europe. There has been speculations that the remaining weapons at Incirlik Air Base in Turkey could be withdrawn; It is interesting that the number of vaults that appear to be readied at RAF Lakenheath is about the same as the numbers remaining active at Incirlik.

Weapons Modernization

In addition to base and aircraft modernizations, the US Air Force is in the process of replacing the legacy B61-3 and B61-4 tactical nuclear bombs with the new B61-12 guided nuclear bomb. Preparations are now underway to ship the B61-12 to bases in Europe and return the B61-3/4 bombs to the United States for dismantlement. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) reported recently that the B61-12 is technically certified for not only US Air Force fighter-bombers but also certified NATO aircraft (F-16, F-35A, and Tornado).

The B61-12 nuclear bomb is now technically certified on the B-2 bomber and all US and NATO dual-capable fighter aircraft.

It is unknown if the B61-12 has been shipped to Europe. NATO officials have only been willing to say preparations are underway. If so, it is unlikely to go to all bases at the same time or necessarily within a short period of time; Instead, the new weapon will probably replace the old weapons gradually depending on aircraft and base upgrade status.

Our current estimate is that there are roughly 100 B61 nuclear bombs deployed in Europe at six bases in five countries. They constitute a small part of the total US nuclear total of roughly 3,700 nuclear weapons. ■

Nuclear Blackmail

DURING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, in 1973, Israel is believed to have placed a number of nuclear warheads on alert. The US argued against the Israel's use of these nuclear weapons. There was a promise that "as long as Israel keeps them in the basement" Washington guaranteed to supply Israel with conventional weapon arsenal necessary to defeat any combination of regional enemies.

It might be argued that this situation has been used to show that nuclear weapons are a deterrent. However, the severity of Israel's year-long destruction and barbarity under this agreement and the compliance of allies shows rather that a nuclear umbrella only makes possible further barbarity for countries who own them and are willing to spend all their resources on possessing them.

The dreadful and unjustified invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan by the west have led to the destruction of those countries and left a heritage of destroyed amenities, undermined culture, millions of dead and children with amputated limbs and no future. It really is time to work even harder to press for the nuclear ban. Then at least we could get on with dealing with the world's

greatest threat – Climate Change.

As it is, Israel now seems intent on moving on with further killing and destruction to remove its only nuclear competitor in the region, Iran.

At the moment, according to the NSA memorandum 20, Iran's stock of uranium hexachloride is now enriched up to 60% purity - weapons grade is 90%. Iran now has 164.7 kgs of enriched uranium according to the IAEA. This is only 2 kg short, if further enriched, for 4 nuclear bombs.

It's now too late to think we should just have a few "civilized" countries like world police with nuclear weapons. Those countries have already used the threat of their weapons to destroy others. Otherwise, to argue that all countries should be able to have a nuclear deterrent is like the argument of the gun lobby that every individual should be able to have a gun and we have seen how that works.

The only safe world would be a nuclear free world and we need to continue campaigning for that. ■

Nuala Young

The Mutual Defence Agreement

The Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) – the secretive treaty between the US and Britain that underpins the London-Washington 'special relationship' and makes it possible for Britain to have nuclear weapons, to exchange classified information, and for the transfer of nuclear materials and equipment between both countries will be renewed.

The deadline for MPs to submit opposition to its renewal expired on Wednesday 23rd October with no debate in Parliament. This railroading is all the more



shocking because the government has proposed to remove the 10-year renewal clause from the MDA, making the treaty permanent. CND maintains that the terms of the MDA are in contravention of the UK's legal commitment as signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The government announced these proposed changes just before Parliament's six-week summer recess. There has been limited opportunity to discuss this since Parliament's return with September and early October taken up with party conferences. For a major change to such a significant treaty to go through on the nod constitutes a shameful attack on democracy and transparency.

While this legislation keeps Britain in lock-step with the US, enabling and subordinating Britain's nuclear weapons to US command, we can still oppose this cooperation and lack of transparency. CND is holding a series of demonstrations at RAF Lakenheath, to oppose the return of US nuclear weapons to Britain to say "No to US nuclear escalation in Europe" which puts us on the frontline in any US/NATO war. ■

Obituary Nigel Anstee-Algar



NIGEL ANSTEE-ALGAR was a member of Oxford CND with a long history of peace campaigning. Nigel lived at Upper Heyford Peace Camp for some years, then campaigned in Cruisewatch against the US cruise missiles stationed at Greenham Common.

Later he was a nukewatcher, monitoring and tracking the UK nuclear warhead convoys that often travel through Oxfordshire. He will be remembered by many for working on the Oxford CND stall, to which he donated and sold many home-made cakes.

Rest in Peace, dear friend. Kindly and gentle Nigel. ■

Nigel Day

Nigel Anstee-Algar on the Oxford CND stall Faringdon Peace Group Fete 2019. In front – Robert Stredder and Margaret Downs, both RIP.

NUKEWATCH

A NUCLEAR WARHEAD CONVOY travelled north on Monday morning 21st October, passing Didcot, Abingdon, Oxford, Kidlington, Bicester and Banbury, through Oxfordshire on its way from AWE Burghfield towards RNAD Coulport, Scotland. There were 4 nuclear warhead carriers in the convoy, escorted by MOD Police and support vehicles. The convoy was monitored and tracked by nukewatchers.

This is the most dangerous cargo on our roads. ■



Northbound convoy warhead carrier and escorts on the A34 Oxford, 10.50am, 21st October 2024.

'Keep Space for Peace' USAF Croughton 2024



TO MARK "KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE" week, 15 Peace Campaigners gathered at main gate RAF Croughton, a US communication base, on the Oxfordshire / Northants border, to campaign against the increasing militarisation of space. The theme this year – "Stop the use of Space for War and Genocide". U.S.A.F. Croughton is one of the largest international intelligence hubs. This major U.S. communication and intelligence base supports many US military sites in Europe and is involved in world-wide war operations. These include space communications, data links, military drone information, bomber guidance, missile defence, diplomatic communications, and command and control war fighting functions. A connected base is at Barford St John, Banbury, Oxfordshire. ■



'Keep Space For Peace': Peace Campaigners outside the U.S.A.F. Croughton base, 12th October.

Nobel Peace Prize 2024

THE NORWEGIAN NOBEL COMMITTEE has awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the Japanese organization **Nihon Hidankyo**, a grassroots movement formed by survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings and nuclear weapons testing (or Hibakusha), "for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again." ■

Nuclear submarine long patrols

ONE OF THE NAVY'S four Vanguard-class subs is always on patrol in case of a nuclear attack.

The Navy boasts they can make their own air and water, so the only limit on their range is "the amount of food on board".

The Royal Navy website states: "Patrols could, in theory, last for years at a time." Originally, Royal Navy policy was for the Vanguard-class submarines to spend a maximum of 80 days at sea, for the welfare of the crew.

But the shortage of working subs has led to longer patrols. HMS Vengeance set a record when she returned to His Majesty's Naval Base, Clyde in March. She had been away for six months and 18 days.

HMS Vigilant spent 195 days on patrol before that.

The other subs are HMS Vanguard and HMS Victorious. All can carry up to 16 Trident missiles, each carrying up to 12 nuclear warheads.

Scientists at Nasa have studied British submarine

crews to see how they cope with prolonged confinement to learn lessons for potential missions to Mars.

During patrols the submariners are only entitled to receive one 40-word message a week from home, known as a family-gram. Bad news, such as deaths or break-ups, is censored by the sub's captain as it is impossible to get the crew home without jeopardising the patrol.

A source said: "Submarine crews make incredible sacrifices to keep this country safe, but because their work is so secret most people don't have a clue." Their location is kept top secret as they are our last line of defence.

The Royal Navy insisted the crew on the six-month patrol were not starving. A spokesperson said: "Every submariner receives a nutritionally balanced diet at all times." They added: "Robust procedures ensure crew safety at all times on missions." ■



A Royal Navy Vanguard-class submarine on patrol in the Atlantic. It can carry up to 16 Trident missiles, each carrying up to 12 nuclear warheads.

UK reaffirms nuclear weapons

IN RESPONSE TO A WRITTEN Parliamentary question, the UK government has reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a credible nuclear deterrent as part of its obligations to NATO.

The question, raised by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 2nd September 2024, asked what discussions the UK government had held with NATO allies about the importance of retaining a "minimum credible deterrent" for as long as global conditions require.

The official response came from Lord Coaker, the Minister of State for the Ministry of Defence, on 16th September 2024. Lord Coaker stated: "Since 1962, the UK has committed its nuclear deterrent to the defence of our NATO allies. The nuclear deterrent deters the most extreme threats to our national

security, keeping the UK and our NATO allies safe."

He further emphasized the ongoing significance of nuclear deterrence within NATO's overall security framework, quoting the NATO Washington Summit declaration:

"As was made clear in the NATO Washington Summit declaration, nuclear deterrence is the cornerstone of Alliance security."

Lord Coaker also stressed that NATO and its allies will continue to take actions to enhance deterrence and defence against all threats and challenges, across all domains. He concluded with a clear reaffirmation of the UK government's stance:

"As the Prime Minister has set out, this Government has an unshakeable commitment to NATO and our nuclear deterrent" ■



Diary

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

November

Wednesday 6th – Faringdon Peace Group 7.30 - 01367 710308 for venue.

Friday 8th – Oxford CND stall to advertise 14th meeting – leafletting. Volunteers for leafletting & posters – Nuala 01865 749459.

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

Mondays – Abingdon Peace Group Vigil – War Memorial 8.15-8.45 Peacemakers.

Monday 11th – 'No more War' banner Remembrance Day.

Thursday 14th – Oxford CND meeting on Lakenheath – Town hall, 6.30pm.

December

Wednesday 4th – Faringdon Peace Group – 7.30pm – 01367 710308 for venue.

13th-14th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Nuala 01865 749459.

Mondays – Abingdon Peace Group Vigil every Monday War Memorial 8.15-8.45 Peacemakers.

Tuesday 17th – St Ethelwold's House 4.00-6.00 Christmas gathering.

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

Faslane & Coulport radioactivity

THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE has blocked the Scottish Government's environmental watchdog from releasing information about radioactive pollution from the Clyde nuclear bomb bases for the last nine years. Emails released under freedom of information (Fol) law reveal that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) asked the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) not to publish information about "environmental issues with radioactivity" at Faslane and Coulport near Helensburgh to protect "national security". In response to Fol requests from *The Ferret* newspaper, Sepa has refused to release more than 20 files about radioactive problems at the bases since 2016, and redacted others. *The Ferret* has appealed to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Membership subscriptions 2024

For details of Bankers Orders

e-mail: 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

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Please contact: Nuala Young
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Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:

Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP

No later than: **Monday 30th December 2024**