



West Midlands

CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Mailing

March/April 2024

The US-UK Nuclear Weapons Agreement

The Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) oversees the transfer of nuclear technologies that enable Britain to maintain and modernise its nuclear arsenal. It has been in place since 1958 and is renewed every ten years and underpins the US/UK "special relationship". It is shrouded in secrecy and lacks any kind of transparency.

Many are asking what the possible return of Donald Trump to the White House would mean for nuclear tensions in 2024 - higher now than they were when he left office four years ago.



In a year when there will be a UK General Election, the MDA is up for extension - but there will be no parliamentary oversight or scrutiny even though it is essential for the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system.

It's important that a spotlight is shone on this secretive relationship which is why CND and Declassified UK held a joint webinar on this topic in February. The recording of the webinar is available on Youtube here: <http://tinyurl.com/y2jbbwtj>

The guest speakers are Richard Norton-Taylor (Declassified UK and former longtime security and defence editor of The Guardian); Baroness Natalie Bennett (Green House of Lords member); and Mark Curtis (Declassified UK), with Kate Hudson in the chair.

BITS FROM ABROAD

Iran has enough uranium to make 12 nuclear bombs in five months, warns former UN weapons inspector.

The revelation follows the disclosure by the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) that the Iranian regime has increased the production rate of highly enriched uranium up to 60 per cent purity. Modern nuclear weapons require uranium to be enriched up to 90 per cent but inspectors within the IAEA believed this could be achieved by Iran very quickly. Now David Albright, a former UN weapons inspector in Iraq, believes that Iran could begin producing weapons-grade uranium in a matter of weeks and already has the technical knowledge to build nuclear weapons.

Telegraph 27th Jan 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/4eksbr79>

In an alarming development, Ali-Akbar Salehi, the former head of **Iran's** nuclear agency has implied in remarks broadcast on Monday that Iran has everything it needs for an A-bomb. In a televised interview, Salehi, who was also foreign minister (2010-2013), was asked if Iran has achieved the capability of developing a nuclear bomb. Avoiding a direct answer he stated, "We have [crossed] all the thresholds of nuclear science and technology. Here's an example: Imagine what a car needs; it needs a chassis, an engine, a steering wheel, a gearbox. You're asking if we've made the gearbox, I say yes. Have we made the engine? Yes, but each one serves its own purpose," the senior regime insider said.

Iran International 12th Feb 2024
<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202402123916>

The head of the largest western supplier of enriched uranium used to fuel nuclear plants in the **US** says it has enough capacity to replace Russian supplies if Washington bans imports from the country. Boris Schucht, chief executive of Urenco, said a US bill proposing to ban uranium imports from Russia would boost a multibillion-dollar effort by western nations to strengthen their nuclear supply chains by providing long-term certainty to market participants.

FT 11th Feb 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/2mf2sw62>

Bellona's survey of events in the field of nuclear and radiation safety relating to **Russia and Ukraine** can be found here:
<http://tinyurl.com/43yjas6a>

FROM THE MEDIA

Nuclear strike (not THAT kind): Workers at Atomic Weapons Establishment where Trident missiles are maintained stage 24-hour walkout amid row over pay.

Daily Mail 24th Jan 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/he7dsjzw>

BASING US nuclear weapons in Britain will make the country a "guaranteed target" in the event of nuclear war, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) has warned. And the plan is likely to have provoked Russia's decision to base its own nuclear weapons in Belarus. CND cited mounting evidence that the British government and the US have agreed to redeploy US missiles in Britain, including documentary evidence.

Morning Star 2nd Feb 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/bdm7v595>

Join the Civil Nuclear Constabulary. The Civil Nuclear Constabulary is a unique armed police force. Our core focus is the security of the nation's nuclear sites and nuclear material in transit, both nationally and internationally.

Cumbria Crack 3rd Feb 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/36c8bvzy>

Listed companies find ever more innovative ways to engineer a crash in their own share price. In the case of Babcock International, last week, the trigger was to hold a "capital markets day". Before the event at the Royal Naval Dockyard in Devonport, which attracted an audience of 100 analysts and investors, Babcock promised to impart no new market-moving financial information. David Lockwood, the chief executive, had barely finished his presentation on what Babcock was up to — and specifically at the warship and submarine refit and refurbishment facilities that it owns and operates at the historic Plymouth facility — when the shares started falling.

The Times 12th Feb 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/4a54y9ra>

US intelligence watchdogs in Washington have accused Russia of secretly developing a new kind of space-based, satellite-killing nuclear weapon.

Sky News 15th Feb 2024
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK45RAjOuxM>

TRIDENT AND RELATED NEWS

Trident missile test failure raises questions about UK's nuclear deterrent.

A Trident nuclear missile failed, plopping into the Atlantic during a test launch attended by the defence secretary last month, raising questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of Britain's nuclear deterrent. The Ministry of Defence said that an "anomaly occurred" during the exercise involving the submarine HMS Vanguard on 30 January that was "event specific", implying it would not have happened in the unlikely event of a war.

The Guardian 21st Feb 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/y8hac7vt>

Dominic Cummings said amongst other things the MoD has: continued to allow critical parts of the nuclear weapons infrastructure to rot creating further massive secret budget nightmares as well as extremely serious physical dangers (cf. the recent near disaster with a submarine),

UK Parliament 24th Jan 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/3bc28edh>

FAILING to address acute concerns about the state of Trident nuclear submarines is putting Scottish lives "at risk" and shows Westminster's "blatant disregard for Scotland", an MP has said. Martin Docherty-Hughes issued the warning ahead of a debate in Parliament today, in which he will attempt to get answers from the UK Government over serious concerns raised by a top insider about Britain's nuclear weapons. The SNP defence spokesperson will lead an adjournment debate on Wednesday evening to highlight bombshell comments from former top government adviser Dominic Cummings. Cummings sparked concerns about Trident when he claimed to have sought assurances from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak that he would deal with the "scandal" of nuclear weapons infrastructure which he described as a "dangerous disaster and a budget nightmare of hard-to-believe and highly classified proportions".

The National 24th Jan 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/5tx9c2m>

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Our website: <https://wmcnd.org.uk/>

NUCLEAR POWER

The Stop Hinkley Campaign has reacted to the news that the cost of Hinkley Point C has ballooned to £46bn and that the first reactor may not now be open until 2031. Stop Hinkley Spokesperson Roy Pumfrey said: "The Government will have known for days if not weeks that this announcement was coming – we certainly heard rumours. You would have thought it would have provoked them into at least re-examining their nuclear roadmap. Instead, on Monday they decided to waste another £1.3bn of taxpayers' money on a carbon copy of Hinkley Point C on the Suffolk Coast. Any sensible Government would be urgently looking at the overwhelming case to provide our power from 100% renewables."

Stop Hinkley 24th Jan 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/y7zufexy>

Great British Nuclear working to create senior opportunities for women. Ten women are gaining boardroom experience to promote gender diversity within the UK's nuclear industry under the Women in Nuclear Non-Executive Director Programme.

New Civil Engineer 29th Jan 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/3a49phfz>

"Why us?" - Holderness residents on Government plans to bury nuclear waste under remote Yorkshire coast. Many people living on the remote coastal strip in Holderness will be asking "Why us?" following the shock news that the government is considering burying nuclear waste there.

Yorkshire Post 3rd Feb 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/mwfernsp>

A group of residents of towns near Japanese nuclear plants submitted a petition on Friday asking regulators to halt safety screening for the restart of idled reactors until damage to a plant that partially lost external power and spilled radioactive water during a recent powerful earthquake is fully examined.

Mainichi 3rd Feb 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/5n7xczs4>

Small Modular Reactors do not solve the many problems of nuclear, NGOs say. As the European Commission prepares to launch its industry alliance for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) on 6 February, civil society organisations stress the high costs and slow progress, making this technology a risky distraction for the climate.

EU Reporter 5th Feb 2024

<http://tinyurl.com/bdh3etc8>

What's On

March/April 2024

The next **Mailing** is due to be sent out at the beginning of May.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 9th April at 19.30. Please e-mail wmcndl@gmail.com for the zoom link.

Hereford Peace Council – Meetings at 11 – 12.30 on the second Monday of the months of January, April, June and September, at Friends Meeting House, King Street, Hereford.

Malvern Churches Justice and Peace group Prayers for Peace, 12 noon on 2nd and 4th Monday of the month (except Bank Holidays), Lyttleton Well Prayer Room, Church Street, Great Malvern.



In January, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists **set the Doomsday Clock at 90 seconds to midnight** for the second year running. It remains the closest to annihilation from nuclear war since the clock's inception in 1947.

**ICAN's new report
UNTENABLE INVESTMENTS**
shows that the number of financial institutions with significant investments in companies involved in producing nuclear weapons fell from 306 to 287 in 2023.

Read the report here:
<http://tinyurl.com/yc3je9nc>

Noticeboard

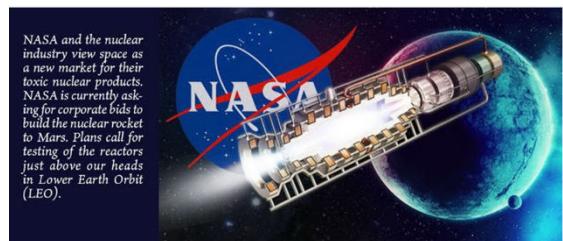
Peace posters: Hereford Peace Council produces monthly posters on peace topics, to be displayed as widely as possible. The posters are not dated. The current poster is:

In war, truth is the first casualty
(Aeschylus)

Please contact jennywmcnd@gm.apc.org if you would like to use these posters.

The nuclear industry takes control of NASA – see the latest from the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRZnSKC-nXg>



New report from BASIC (British American Security Information Council)



Summary of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation: Does Britain's Nuclear Deterrent Policy Need Updating?

<https://basicint.org/appg-britains-deterrent-policy/>