



# West Midlands

CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

## Mailing

May/June 2024

### ***Stop nuclear weapons returning to the UK!***

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace was launched in March to campaign against the proposed return of US nuclear weapons to the UK. Fourteen organisations have already joined the group (including CND) and members have delivered a letter to the base commander at RAF Lakenheath.

There will be an international peace camp from 13<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July where participants from other US bases in Europe and campaigners from across the world are expected to be present. There is a plan to walk or cycle over three days from Norwich to Lakenheath to establish a continuous presence at the base until the end of the camp. For more information, go to [www.lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk](http://www.lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk) .



CND is organising a **Day of Action on 11<sup>th</sup> May** with events across the country - find out more by contacting [information@cnduk.org](mailto:information@cnduk.org) or check the WMCND website for details of local action – which will be the week before, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May at Kings Heath Farmers Market 10.00 – 12 noon .

Please also take a look at the latest CND Campaign magazine (see link on p. 4) which has a detailed report about the government's latest "Defence Command Paper" entitled ***Delivering the UK's nuclear deterrent as a national endeavour***. CND General Secretary Kate Hudson describes it as a PR exercise, "a sorry story of imperial delusion, nuclear proliferation, and international lawbreaking". Read more in the magazine!

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## froBITS FROM ABROAD

**President Joe Biden's State of the Union speech** failed to discuss a critical matter — the administration's funding for the upgrading of all three legs of the nuclear weapons triad: Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), submarines and bomber aircraft. The upgrades, new weapons systems and production of new nuclear warheads are estimated to cost taxpayers over \$2 trillion dollars over the next 20 years.

*Truthout 29th March 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/5yd82naa>

Ozershsk - code named City 40 - was the birthplace of the **Soviet** nuclear weapons programme, now it's one of the most contaminated places on the planet with residents exposed to high radiation levels. A man living in a secret city five times more radioactive than Chernobyl has been left with facial deformities he blames on huge nuclear meltdowns.

*Daily Star 24th March 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/2s4drd52>

**Biden** has inadvertently encouraged vulnerable nations to seek the ultimate shield. From now on, any state with genuine fears for its own security is bound to consider building nuclear weapons. Over nearly eight decades after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, careful diplomacy and multinational collaboration have limited the number of nuclear-armed countries to nine. But that count is likely to rise—ironically because of American policies designed to prevent nuclear escalation with Russia. Recent events have shown how much deference even super-powers give to countries with nuclear weapons, and how grievously Ukraine has suffered for lacking them.

*The Atlantic 19th April 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/56evj5kw>

**Polish President Andrzej Duda** said Poland is “ready” to host nuclear weapons on its territory if NATO decides to reinforce its eastern flank.

*Politico 22nd April 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/54uuuy44w>

**The European Union** doubled its purchases of **Russian** nuclear fuel in 2023, data from Eurostat and the UN's international trade service Comtrade show.

*Bellona 15th March 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/mcjkd7pi>

## FROM THE MEDIA

UK's ever more expensive nuclear submarines will torpedo spending plans for years to come. Whoever wins the next election, a reckoning is overdue on the costs of Britain's nuclear deterrent. When Rishi Sunak visited Barrow-in-Furness, he said the Cumbrian town was “mission critical for our country” because of its role building four new nuclear submarines to carry the UK's nuclear weapons. *Observer 31st March 2024*

<https://tinyurl.com/mtsu99vp>

The SNP support signing an international treaty banning nuclear weapons after independence - despite External Affairs Secretary Angus Robertson refusing to say as much. The news comes after Robertson repeatedly declined to commit an independent Scotland to signing the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at the launch of a government white paper on Scotland's place in the world in March. The SNP have been clear that the UK's nuclear weaponry, based on the River Clyde, would have to leave the country after a Yes vote.

*The National 14th April 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/np3n24ud>

Nuclear weapons would only take minutes to destroy human civilisation as we know it, killing more than two billion people, according to a researcher's terrifying account. A newly released book by journalist and author Annie Jacobsen, "Nuclear War: A Scenario," ... delivers a stark warning about the potential devastation of a nuclear conflict.

*Mirror 6th April 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/ynkrwt72>

Labour and nuclear weapons: a turbulent ideological history. From the 1940s to Keir Starmer, the party leadership has zigzagged in and out of love with the bomb.

*The Week 15th April 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/yyshexda>

Maps reveal the devastation a nuclear strike would cause in the UK and US.

*Metro 19th April 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/35xyxury>

The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Albany (SSN 753) arrived in Faslane, Scotland for a scheduled port visit, April 17, 2024.

*UK Defence Journal 19th April 2024*  
<https://tinyurl.com/5d9wmcjf>

## TRIDENT AND RELATED NEWS

British military aircraft regularly carry highly radioactive material across the Atlantic to one of the RAF's largest bases on flights vital to the Trident nuclear weapons system, according to new research. The little-known flights are a lifeline sustaining the 'special relationship' embodied in the secretive US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement due to be renewed later this year without the need for any parliamentary scrutiny or even approval. At least ten of the special round trips between RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire and US military bases, usually by large RAF C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft, take place every year, according to Nukewatch, which monitors traffic in nuclear weapons and their components.

*Declassified UK 27th March 2024*

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8un8u6>

KEIR STARMER: My commitment to the UK's nuclear deterrent is... Unshakeable. Absolute. Total. Watching a nuclear submarine being built is a humbling experience. It takes some of our finest engineers harnessing the world's most cutting-edge technology, all in an extremely high-security environment. I'm proud that today I'll be the first Labour Party leader in over 30 years to visit the shipyard of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, to see these incredible boats being built. And in the face of rising global threats and growing Russian aggression, I'm proud to confirm to Mail readers that Labour's commitment to our nuclear deterrent is total.

*Daily Mail 11th April 2024*

<https://tinyurl.com/f8hz36j7>

The UK Government has been urged to "come clean" on the state of the nuclear infrastructure at Faslane after new images of a submarine returning from patrol showed obvious rust and missing panelling. The Vanguard-class submarine – one of four which are supposed to patrol the oceans carrying the UK's nuclear weapon deterrent at all times – was photographed by locals near Helensburgh as it returned from a patrol mission which lasted in excess of six months. Patrols have grown longer and longer in recent years in order to cover for the fact that two of the UK's four Vanguard-class nuclear submarines are currently in maintenance – and three of them should have already been retired.

*The National 19th March 2024*

<https://tinyurl.com/5a8j5vn7>

The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has identified a gap in parliamentary scrutiny of Ministry of Defence (MOD) spending in a report published in March. The report, which focusses on the MOD's 2023-2033 Equipment Plan, states that some parts of the plan "cannot be scrutinised in the public domain for security reasons" and that none of the arrangements and mandates of the other relevant committees allow for proper scrutiny of these areas.

*Nuclear Information Service 11th April 2024*

<https://tinyurl.com/42nywerh>

## NUCLEAR POWER

The country's civil nuclear industry is set to expand under the government's ambitions set out in the *Civil nuclear: Roadmap to 2050*, where it said it wants to see 24GW of new nuclear delivered, including by large nuclear plants such as Sizewell C, as well as small modular reactors (SMRs) and advanced modular reactors (AMRs). A significant uplift in workforce capacity will need to take place to deliver that ambition and the government said 50% more highly skilled workers will be needed in the next 10 years for both the nuclear weapons and civil nuclear power industries. ... "The investment in nuclear skills," the government said, "includes £350M from the government and more than £400M from industry", which will "create some 5,000 new apprenticeships in the next four years."

*New Civil Engineer 26th March 2024*

<https://tinyurl.com/4uau3s63>

HINKLEY Point C has helped boost the population of young people aged 25 to 39 in the Bridgwater area by a quarter, a new report has found. The report, published by EDF, says there has been a 25 per cent growth in that demographic in the Sedgemoor area since the project began - a figure three times greater than the national average. According to the HPC Socio-Economic Impact Report 2024, the nuclear construction project is "providing an opportunity for young people to stay and thrive in West Somerset and Sedgemoor, an area with a history of low social mobility and an ageing population".

*Somerset County Gazette 18th April 2024*

<https://tinyurl.com/mj6jy3r4>

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## What's On

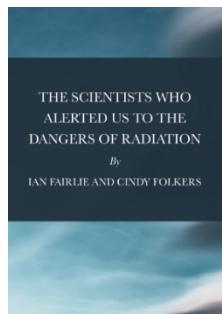
### May/June 2024

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

**The next meeting will be on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May at 19.30. Please e-mail [wmcndl@gmail.com](mailto: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.



"The Scientists Who Alerted us to Radiation's Dangers", now published, contains the biographies of 23 radiation scientists who blew the whistle on radiation risks but were victimised by their governments and their nuclear establishments for doing

so. Most of these scientists are no longer with us. Recent epidemiology evidence clearly shows that the denials and obfuscations on radiation risks by successive governments and their nuclear establishment in the past on both sides of the Atlantic were and are wrong and the maligned scientists were right.

Published by Ethics Press, more details here: <https://ethicspress.com/products/the-scientists-who-alerted-us-to-the-dangers-of-radiation>

**Read the latest CND magazine here:**  
<https://cnduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/April2024.pdf>

## 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 posters are:

**At the start of the 20th century, 10% of those killed in war were civilians. Today, 90% of those killed in war are civilians.**

*Layered Memories of Conflict, Alison Lochhead*

**Nuclear Weapons Cannot Protect; They Can Only Destroy** Alexander Schallenberg, Austrian Foreign minister

**Please contact [jennywmcnd@gn.apc.org](mailto:jennywmcnd@gn.apc.org) if you would like to use these posters.**



### **Hazel Neal**

Sadly, longtime supporter Hazel Neal passed away in February this year. The story of Hazel's activism in CND began when she was about ten years old, being taken on a CND march by her mother. Although she never had the chance to check where or when that was, the campaign never left her. In Birmingham she became active in WMCND, helping with Hiroshima Day exhibitions and on demonstrations. When the women's peace camp was established in the early '80s at Greenham Common, it made absolute sense for her to join the camp.

Hazel's political activity included travel to international peace camps. She organised Conscientious Objectors Day in Birmingham and owned one share in BAE Systems, so that she had a voice as a member of Campaign Against the Arms Trade at shareholders' meetings. Another regular commitment was helping at the Coventry Peace House night shelter for refugees and asylum seekers.

In 2016 she had an accident that resulted in a catastrophic neck injury, and she became dependent on other people, living in a care home for the last few years. It was a huge adjustment but she was determined to cope.

If there was one word that defined Hazel, it was activism - but she was also a good friend. She brought a great deal of kindness and compassion into people's lives. Hazel was much loved and she will be missed. Her radiant smile will never be forgotten.