



# OXFORD CND

## NEWSLETTER

July / August 2026



## (RAF) USAF Fairford Declaration Independence from America 4th July, 2026



**Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

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# The Heart of the Matter

IS IT POSSIBLE to take proper stock of a disastrous war which may be over – or maybe not? We might be forgiven if we simply waited for the next Trumpian twist or turn, but the peace movement cannot delay “learning the lessons” correctly, because otherwise it cedes that task to be done incorrectly by the commentators and talking heads.

First, we must not lose sight of the central fact that it was an illegal war, as illegal as the Iraq war or Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. The UN Charter is unequivocal. Disputes should be settled by peaceful means, and member states should refrain “from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations” (II: 3 & 4). The UN Security Council (SC) has the exclusive right to decide on a threat to peace or act of aggression, and to authorise measures to restore or maintain peace (VII:39). Immediate action by a member state is only allowed “if an armed attack occurs” (VII:51) and must be immediately reported to the SC.

This primary reality, acknowledged at the start of the war, is being eroded by the passage of time, and by the tendency of politicians and media to “move on”, on the facile grounds that “we have to accept the world as it is”.

It is also undermined by specious arguments such as this one recently from the NATO Secretary General: Trump was wrong to start the war, but instead of saying so and refusing to join in, the NATO countries should have used their participation as a bargaining chip to get better treatment from him.

We may point out the numerous inconsistencies in the official justifications for this war (as for Putin’s). It is ludicrous to claim, for example, the return of UN nuclear inspectors as a victory, when they only left Iran after the Israeli attack last year. Yet we have to avoid aligning involuntarily with critics to the right of Trump, and indeed with Netanyahu himself.

The nuclear question lies at the heart of everything and that should be our focus. It is

obvious that Trump is seeking a deal offering him less than the 2015 JCPOA agreement with Iran which he destroyed, but the argument has to go further. How many times has one heard the simple fact that Israel has nuclear weapons mentioned at all during discussion of Iran’s nuclear “threat” – even in relatively objective journalism that casts doubt on the dire warnings from Trump and Netanyahu?

A Google search as I write reveals a tiny handful of recent mentions. One is in the *Trinidad Guardian* – no criticism but it is not so widely read outside Trinidad. Another is a recent bulletin from CND itself! It reports an unusual initiative from thirty House Democrats calling on Trump’s administration

to provide Congress with information regarding Israel’s undeclared nuclear weapons programme.

“We cannot develop a coherent non-proliferation policy for the Middle East, including with respect to Iran’s civil nuclear program,” they argued, while maintaining “official silence” on Israel’s nuclear capabilities,

and Israel should be held “to the same standard of transparency” as other states. There has been almost nil coverage of this initiative, and no official reply.

I fear we cannot rely so much now on the previously valid argument that Iran has consistently declared that it will not develop or acquire nuclear weapons. It still says so, but its trust in the durability of any agreement based on that commitment hangs on a thread after the actions of the US and Israel, and strategic planners in Tehran will be reckoning with the worst scenario.

Relatively more moderate leaders were wiped out on the first day of the war – another act of Trumpian folly. Tehran will also have studied the example of North Korea which only embarked seriously on its nuclear weapons programme after George W Bush in 2001 included Pyongyang in his “axis of evil”. To bring Iran back from that brink needs diplomacy, trust, and compromise – the only means through which peace is ever secured. ■

**John Gittings**  
**The Glorious Art of Peace (OUP)**



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# The Toxic Legacy of US bases

IT'S GOOD TO SEE that Bicester MP Calum Miller is calling for the urgent testing for the presence of seriously toxic chemicals on the site of the former USAF base at Upper Heyford. The MOD has previously disingenuously suggested there is no evidence to suggest immediate risk to the public. There may be no immediate evidence, but there is growing concern for longer term and less obvious consequences. When I attended a conference on US bases in Dublin 18 years ago, American delegates revealed their concern about these chemicals, known as PFAs used on the bases for practice in dealing with fires. Apparently, women living around bases where PFAs had been extensively used, were advised not to get pregnant. There was a growing realisation that these PFAs had long term carcinogenic and genetic consequences.

When this concern was raised, as the MOD were closing down Upper Heyford, people were told that any "cleaning up" could be the responsibility of future developers.

Some 26 years ago, I had some rescued horses grazing in the field alongside the old Thames at Redbridge. Because we depended on the river to provide their water, I was concerned to notice sludge and foam coming down the river. For some days I had to transport tap water for them. A little later I noticed reports in the *Oxford Mail* and *Times*, that there had been "an incident" at Fairford US base around a fire-fighting exercise.

As you report in this week's Oxford papers the

recent Veritas laboratory testing reports a massive pollution of PFAs at the old Upper Heyford site, 43,000 times the annual average environmental Quality Standard for PFAs. The national study points to USAF/RAF bases as the most toxic locations in England.

On Saturday, July 4th National CND called for us to mark the day by making our own Declaration of Independence at US bases in the UK including one of the most strategic bases at Fairford, Gloucestershire and handing it in to the base commander. In the early 1980s we did this at Upper Heyford. One of our members, dressed as Paul Revere, was riding a horse to deliver the declaration her father happened to be a Tory Peer, but her mother was American.

One of our Peace group was an expert in calligraphy and had created a very impressive version of our call for Independence. All the peace campaigning at Upper Heyford with its 5-day Blockade in the early 1980s helped the pressure to close the base. It's maybe not impossible that a future UK government might listen to our call for the closure of our US bases that put us at risk in so many ways but are not answerable to our democratically elected government.

Certainly, local feeling has changed especially over the last years with Trump's aspersion on British soldiers and the use of the base to support his illegal operations across the globe. ■

**Nuala Young**

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## Extract from (RAF) USAF Fairford Declaration of Independence

WE, THE UNDERMENTIONED, do solemnly demand the return of the land and cessation of use of this land to mount unprovoked and indiscriminate bombing campaigns against citizens of other countries.

We are despairing that the United States Government and military continue to threaten and meddle in other countries' affairs, especially concerning the lands of Venezuela, Iran, Cuba and South America. We wish to uphold the peoples of Diego Garcia who have been removed from their homes and placed in poverty.

We are alarmed at the immoral use of the deadly weapons called 'Drones', to assassinate and remove people of innocence without calling upon

the adjudication of the civilised courts who could decide innocence or guilt.

Here, at RAF Fairford today, we are fearful of the increased deployment of such deadly drones from this base. We also condemn Fairford's use in the illegal bombing of Iran and all the other horrific wars this base has facilitated, including on Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. We encourage the United States of America to uphold the keeping of International Laws and Treaties, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear-Weapons, thus ensuring that the Heavens and every corner of the Earth, are free from domination and greed. ■

**Nuala Young**

# IMPORTANT

## Change to Oxford CND bank account

### **We are having to change the Oxford CND bank account.**

It is important that you will have to change subscription payments to the new bank soon. We will ask you to arrange for subscription standing orders, online payments and donations to be paid into the new account when that is sorted.  
£10 or £5 low wage annual payment.

In the meantime, cheque payments only for 2026 subscriptions and donations can be posted to –

**Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford OX3 8HP.**

Normal service will resume as soon as possible. **Thank you.**

## Condemning the Defence Universities Alliance

THE DEFENCE UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE (DUA) is a new Ministry of Defence initiative launched in April 2026, seeking 20 founding university members to create a strategic network between UK higher education institutions and the defence sector.

The alliance aims to build a “more strategic relationship between defence and academia” with three core objectives: advancing defence research, promoting defence careers, and fostering industry partnerships. By signing the DUA charter, universities publicly commit to “actively growing research and development activity and capacity in defence and national security relevant fields and technologies to support defence aims and objectives.” This means institutions would dedicate resources, research capacity, and career services to advancing military technology and encouraging students into militarised industries, effectively becoming formal partners in the UK’s war machine.

The government is treating campuses as extensions of military infrastructure rather than

spaces for independent inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge that serves humanity.

The government’s broader “whole of society” approach to “defence” treats education not as a public good but as a tool for sustaining warfare and arms exports. The alliance represents the deepening militarisation of our educational institutions, significantly eroding their ability to pursue knowledge free from corporate and military influence.

As organisations committed to education, justice, peace and the public good, we call on universities, students, staff, trade unions, and local communities to oppose this initiative and defend education as a space for democratic inquiry, critical thought, and collective liberation. **This statement calls on universities not to become founding members and not to sign.**

The Defence Universities Alliance must be resisted. The MoD has been actively seeking 20 founding members to form the initial network. **Oxford, Cambridge, and Imperial are notably missing from the key institutions tapped for this.**



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# World cost of nuclear weapons

A RECENT REPORT from ICAN, the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, documents the exorbitant waste of public funds allocated to nuclear weapons programmes. Between 2021-25, nine nuclear weapons states spent \$471 billion – almost half a trillion dollars – on maintaining and upgrading their nuclear arsenals.

## Global spending on nukes is rising rapidly.

It was up by \$118.8bn in 2025, 19% more than 2024. But there is little if any democratic oversight or public scrutiny of this escalating element of military budgets, including Britain's. Nuclear weapons programmes are always long-term projects. ICAN's report also outlines nuclear developments over the next decade: 'nuclear-armed states are currently planning to build new nuclear weapons systems that will be in operation through 2100.'

**Britain overtook Russia to become the third highest spender in 2025.** Successive British governments spent \$46bn on UK nuclear weapons between 2021-25. The UK's nuclear weapons programme is expanding, and so is nuclear spending which now accounts for around 14% of the MoD's budget. Britain overtook Russia to become the third highest spender in 2025. The government spent \$12.6bn, an increase of 17%. This compares to Russia's 6% increase to \$9.5bn in 2025.

The United States has been the top nuclear weapons spender for almost 50 years, and remains so. It spends more than the combined amount of all other nuclear weapons states. US nuclear weapons programmes cost \$69.2bn in 2025 – a rise

of \$12.4bn, 22% between 2024-25.

The increase in the US nuclear weapons budget was almost as much as the entire amount that China, the second highest spender, allocated to its nuclear weapons programme last year. From the highest nuclear spenders to the lowest, the nine nuclear weapons states are the US, China, UK, Russia, France, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea.

The report in question is not simply a report on nuclear spending. It draws attention to how nuclear arms manufacturers are benefiting from increased spending by governments. Twenty-five of these companies earned a minimum of \$38bn in 2025, and hold at least \$401bn worth of ongoing contracts according to ICAN estimates.

These include BAE Systems, Rolls Royce Submarines, Lockheed Martin UK, a British subsidiary of the US aerospace giant, and Babcock International, all of which are involved in the UK's Trident programme. ICAN also highlights the alternatives, illustrating how diplomacy, healthcare, education, and environment might benefit if governments redirected their nuclear spending to other projects.

The amount of public funds governments allocate to nuclear weapons programmes is a political choice like any other. A 21st century nuclear arms race is already underway. The peace and anti-war movement in Britain and internationally is right to raise the demand: **Cut Warfare Not Welfare! ■**

**Carol Turner**  
London CND Chair

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## UK increases spend on nuclear weapons

**THE GOVERNMENT published the long-delayed Defence Investment Plan which increases military spending by a further £15 billion**, with military spending planned to rise even more to nearly £80 billion per year by 2029.

Announcing the Plan, outgoing Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that the government **will be spending £64 billion on nuclear weapons over the next four years.**

CND General Secretary, Sophie Bolt, has responded – arguing that preparing for war is



only dragging the world closer towards a nuclear conflict and why we need a new direction to tackle the real security threats we face.

Following that announcement, CND is increasing our campaigning work to expose the true costs of Britain's nuclear weapons. As well as raising awareness about the deadly risks they pose, we are working with trade unions to build support for

investment in what really keeps us safe: health, education, climate action and public services. ■

# Conscientious Objector Day

Oxford CND and Sea Green singers gathered in Bonn Square to mark Conscientious Objector Day – 15th May, 2026.



## Gentle, Angry women

Speakers Marie Walsh, Di McDonald, Nuala Young and Organiser Sarah Westcott at the 'Gentle, Angry Women' film-show at UPP cinema, East Oxford, on **International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, 24th May**.

The film featured younger recent marchers and 80 people attended, including Peggy Seeger, whose CND film was also shown.



## Levellers Day

Oxford CND held a stall at Levellers Day, 2026, Burford, Oxfordshire (left).

Held on the Saturday closest to May 17, Levellers Day features political debates, a procession through the town, guest speakers, choirs, and folk music.

Levellers Day banner (below).



# US plans \$4bn for UK bases

MORE THAN **\$4 billionn (£3bn)** is to be spent upgrading the US government's military and spy bases in the UK, where more than 12,000 US military personnel are spread around at least 15 bases and facilities.

The largest portion of funding – more than **\$1.6bn** – is due to be spent at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, the largest American base in the UK and home to 6,000 military personnel. to include new infrastructure to house a nuclear arsenal, reinforced shelters, increased security, accommodation for extra personnel.

Anti-nuclear LAP campaigners have mounted regular protests at the base.

Another **\$1.1bn** is earmarked for Mildenhall airbase in Suffolk, at which about 4,000 American military personnel are stationed, and the base plays an important part in facilitating and refuelling bombing missions. Covert forces are based at Mildenhall and fly special operatives into politically sensitive territories.

The most secretive US base in the UK is Menwith Hill in the Yorkshire Dales The US is spending **\$163m** at Menwith Hill. As partners in the Five Eyes (FVEY) alliance – comprising the U.S. and UK, alongside Australia, Canada, and New Zealand – the nations have an unprecedented level of intelligence sharing. Notably, alongside flying stations Lakenheath, Mildenhall, and Fairford, the North Yorkshire base was among those specifically designated as no-fly zones when unidentified drones were thought to be disrupting U.S. operations in the UK. U.S. Air Force and National Security Agency (NSA) personnel work at Menwith Hill alongside those from the Royal Air Force and the UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). The base's presence in the UK, and apparent involvement in some of the most controversial elements of US intelligence gathering, is a major point of contention for British protesters.

(RAF) USAF Fairford in Gloucestershire will have

unspecified upgrades, to the value of **\$500 million.**

Fairford was placed in 'care and maintenance' status in 2010, essentially mothballing the airfield, but has become steadily more active since hosting its first subsequent strategic bomber deployment in 2014.

This deployment turned into almost yearly appearances of B-52 Stratofortresses, B-1B Lancers, or B-2A Spirits (or a combination of the three), and

then in 2019 the base once again became home to a permanent operational detachment of U-2 Dragon Lady intelligence aircraft.

At present, the base is home to a sizeable force of B-52s and B-1Bs which were deployed in support of Operation Epic Fury. The bombers flew daily sorties from Fairford to Iran while hostilities were at the peak. Now, during the shaky ceasefire, the bombers have continued to fly training missions from the base at a similar tempo. There appears to be little sign of the assembled bomber force going home en masse.

Upgrades to Fairford might be aimed at better supporting these long-term bomber deployments, though more pertinently they might include improved facilities to accommodate the B-21 Raider The first B-21 is due to arrive at Ellsworth AFB next year, and Fairford will almost certainly be one of the first overseas locations to see the next generation bomber touch down. Of the three locations worldwide earmarked for forward deployed B-2 operations, with climate-controlled hangars to preserve the delicate radar-absorbent coatings, RAF Fairford is the only one outside of the Indo-Pacific.

There have also been plans that would see Fairford becoming a hub for unmanned intelligence aircraft like the RQ-4 Global Hawk, though aside from an initial proving flight this appears to have gone quiet. Indeed, even the still-classified RQ-180 official designation unknown – has been seen to make its European debut in Greece, rather than from Fairford as many expected. ■

**INDEPENDENCE FROM AMERICA DAY PROTESTS**

**KICK OUT TRUMP'S NUKES**  
**SATURDAY 27 JUNE**  
11:00am RAF Lakenheath Main Gate, Brandon Road, IP27 9FD  
Organised by Lakenheath Alliance for Peace, supported by Mid Wales Against Arms  
US nuclear weapons are stationed at RAF Lakenheath alongside F35A nuclear-capable fighter jets. The base was used in the illegal bombing of Iran.  
Contact for more information: [swi.wrlg744@icloud.com](mailto:swi.wrlg744@icloud.com)

**SEND THE US BOMBERS HOME!**  
**SATURDAY 4 JULY**  
1pm USAF Fairford Main Gate, Horcott Road, GL7 4DQ  
RAF Fairford has been central to Trump's illegal war on Iran – with US long-range bombers carrying out twice-daily bombing missions from the base.  
Contact for more information: [oxfordcnd@shuneeoop.coop](mailto:oxfordcnd@shuneeoop.coop)

**INDEPENDENCE FROM USA NOW!**  
**SATURDAY 4 JULY**  
3pm to 7pm RAF Menwith Hill, Harrogate HG3 2RL  
Followed by meeting at Kettleby Village Hall  
RAF Menwith Hill is part of the US National Missile Defence System and is the biggest US spy base outside of the US.  
Contact for more information: 0174 730796 or email [info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk](mailto:info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk)

CND



# Diary

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

## July

**Wednesday 1st** - Faringdon Peace Group.

Friends Meeting House 7.30. Speaker – Simon Hill.

**Saturday 4th** – RAF (USAF) Fairford – Declaration of Independence from America 1.00pm.

**10th-11th** – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp  
– Nuala 01865 749459

**Mondays** – Abingdon Peace Group.

**Vigil every Monday** – War Memorial 8.15-8.45  
Peacemakers.

**Monday 27th** – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign  
Zoom meeting 4.30pm.

## August

**Mondays** – Abingdon Peace Group.

**Vigil every Monday** – War Memorial 8.15-8.45  
Peacemakers.

**Thursday 6th** – Oxford CND Hiroshima Day, Bonn  
Square, 1.00pm.

**Thursday 6th** – Abingdon Hiroshima Day St  
Ethelwold's 7.00pm.

Abingdon Peace Group will have a speaker from  
Hiroshima.

**9th-10th** – 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>

**Salisbury Vigils virtual tour**

– <https://youtu.be/IOTk0Qm7hWI>



## Latest News

### UK defence spend

On 30th June, 2026, Keir Starmer, the UK's outgoing Prime Minister announced his Labour Government will spend £15 billion on defence. He said, "We are already delivering the biggest sustained increase in defence spending since the 1980s – £270 billion over the spending review period. And I can announce today that under the defence investment plan, we are increasing this by a further £15bn, setting a new record of spending almost £300bn over the next four years to back our armed forces and strengthen our national security." He also added: "It means... some capital projects, for example on roads and energy, which are important but not immediately vital, will no longer go ahead as planned." So, next time someone tells you there's no money to pay nurses, doctors, teachers, firefighters et al... remind them of that £270 billion!

### Membership subscriptions 2026

**For details of Bankers Orders  
e-mail: [liztaylor5@virgin.net](mailto:liztaylor5@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 2026 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: **Monday 24th August 2026**