OXFORD CND
NEWSLETTER

November / December 2026



The outlook for the ongoing conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel points toward a high risk of military escalation and prolonged regional instability.

Washington and Israel are weighing a short, intense post-election military campaign targeting remaining Iranian infrastructure and nuclear sites.

CND calls on all to JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN to send a strong message to the government that we will not allow it to drag us into a devastating war with Iran.

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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Taking the First Step

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT is an apt description of attitudes towards the threat of nuclear war. A YouGov survey last year conducted in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain showed that between 41% and 55% in each country believed that another world war was likely to occur within the next five to ten years, and that the large majority expected it to involve the use of nuclear weapons. In a recent *Guardian* article, Gordon Brown cited this data to say that "Now, more than at any time since the 1960s Cuban missile crisis, the European public fears a third world war". The Royal United Services Institution, solidly within the defence establishment, has published an article by former British diplomat Tim Willasey-Wilsey citing the way that "world leaders now make threats [of using nuclear weapons] in a relatively casual manner", and warning that "a nuclear war will not be about an inability to join dots but another massive failure of human imagination."

Copies of Annie Jacobsen's *Nuclear War A Scenario* are piled high in Waterstones. A nuclear incident leading to global conflict is "the reality of the world in which we all live. The nuclear war scenario proposed in this book could happen tomorrow. Or later today." Her book is now joined by Mark Lynas's *Six Minutes to Midnight*: his prologue begins with "a brief metallic flash" above New York City that destroys a group of ten-year-old schoolgirls waiting to cross the road – and everyone else.

The spectre of the bomb hangs over us once again, he says, and we have been "lucky" over the past seventy-five years. Most reviews of these books do not dismiss their prognoses of nuclear catastrophe as far-fetched, but see them as well within the bounds of possibility. There is an interesting contrast with the way that an earlier book, Eric Schlosser's *Command and Control: Nuclear-Weapons, the Damascus Accident, and the Illusion of Safety*, published in 2014, was received. It was widely praised for its meticulous account of nuclear war near-misses in the past, but the reviewers failed to pick up on Schlosser's bleak concluding words. "Right now, thousands of missiles are hidden away... They are a collective death wish, barely suppressed. Every one of them is an accident waiting to happen, a potential act of mass murder".

Campaigners for nuclear disarmament – some of us with memories going back more than sixty years – will welcome this belated attention to the nuclear threat, but that should be small comfort. Rather, it should lead to a some deep, and uncomfortable, self-questioning. If the truth has been on our side, why have we been so spectacularly unsuccessful (apart, perhaps, from the achievement of TPNW), is getting the message across? If crying out "Stop this Madness" for so many decades has not worked, what will? It is time to rethink our strategy and, against an official trend in the opposite direction (modernising nuclear weapons and preparing for their use) focus on a goal that might actually be achievable.

For Britain, I suggest this should be to work for a declaration of no-first-use. The campaign NoFirstUse Global has explored this at length in documents submitted to successive Review Conferences of the parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

If agreement could be achieved on what seems a simple proposition – not to use nuclear weapons unless they are used against one (China is the only country to subscribe to it presently, India but with reservations) – the campaign sees it as a first step towards more initiatives. All exercises involving scenarios of first use would be permanently cancelled. The credibility of no-first-use would be strengthened by taking all nuclear weapons off high-alert, so that they were not ready to launch at a moment's notice. It should lead towards the elimination of missiles that are essentially nuclear first-strike weapons, and prioritization of defence-only systems. It would mean advancing onto the first step of the long ladder upwards to a nuclear-free world.

We may prefer to continue calling out Ban the Bomb – and we can still do so. But we should strongly endorse the No First Use campaign, and we should actively search for other "first steps" as well. ■

John Gittings
The Glorious Art of Peace (OUP)

£15bn investment in the UK's warhead programme

THE ATOMIC WEAPONS ESTABLISHMENT (AWE) in Aldermaston, Berkshire, will seek to replace ageing facilities with what it is calling its Future Materials Campus.

The new buildings will seek to support the UK's new Astraea nuclear warhead programme.

AWE said the programme will help maintain about 9,000 jobs at AWE Aldermaston, with more than 1,500 new jobs expected later.

New office spaces, advanced manufacturing facilities and testing laboratories are expected to be amongst the improvements.

There are more than 1,200 buildings on the Aldermaston site, more than half of which were built before 1960.

AWE also operates AWE Burghfield about seven miles (11.2km) away, where warheads are assembled, serviced and decommissioned.

An outline planning application to rebuild parts of the nuclear weapons factory has been submitted to West Berkshire Council. Questions have been raised over whether West Berkshire Council has the expertise and resources needed to scrutinise plans for a major redevelopment at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Aldermaston. The nuclear weapons site is expected to submit plans for its Future Materials Campus, part of a wider £15bn investment in the UK's warhead programme.

AWE said it will begin preparing the site after the outline planning application is approved, with main construction work expected to start within two to three years.



Above: Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston – the nuclear bomb factory.

RNAD Coulport

In Scotland work has started on a building which will arm the Royal Navy's new multi-billion-pound nuclear submarines, with Naval Base Commander Clyde Commodore Andy Bray recently breaking ground on a new facility at Royal Naval Armament Depot (RNAD) Coulport to support future classes of submarines.

Building 300 at the site will house the Vertical Embarkation System, or VES, a new facility used to load tactical weapons onto future Dreadnought-class deterrent submarines.

The multi-million-pound project is now up and running with initial piling underway. In less than two years, the building should be ready to support Dreadnought preparations at HMNB Clyde and will likely support the future SSN-AUKUS programme too.

Last year, the government approved a £270.7m investment package, an initial three-year funding package, to adapt and improve the infrastructure at the base and prepare it to welcome the Dreadnoughts and the Navy's next generation of attack submarines.

Chancellor John Healey confirmed plans to build three new floating docks for HM Naval Base Clyde in the UK, supporting the defence industrial base and sovereign capabilities. ■

Devonport

HMNB Devonport is set to receive £7.1 billion in infrastructure investment over the next decade. Announced as part of the UK government's £26 billion national naval base upgrade program (*Project Royal Oak*), this funding increases Devonport's previous £4.4 billion allocation by roughly £2.7 billion in new authorizations.

UK Base security boosted

An additional £470 million over four years will go into protecting defence sites, with security strengthened across the estate following the incidents at RAF Fairford and RAF Molesworth and work under way to extend restricted airspace protections around military bases. ■

IMPORTANT

New Oxford CND bank account

WE HAVE A NEW OXFORD CND BANK ACCOUNT
It is important that you will now have to change subscription payments to the new bank.
Many members have not been able to pay 2026 subscriptions
PLEASE DO THAT NOW to help Oxford CND continue peace campaigning.
Please arrange with your bank for subscription standing orders, online payments and donations to be paid into the new account:
Oxford CND
A/c 50017292
Sort code 089250
£10 or £5 low wage annual payment.

Cheque payments for 2026 subscriptions and donations can be posted to:
Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford OX3 8HP.

These membership payments help toward the cost of printing, posting and emailing the bi-monthly Oxford CND newsletter.
Also news, information and notification of rallies and gatherings is emailed out to members.
Please also remember to pay the upcoming 2027 subscriptions.
THANK YOU!

Key UK Nuclear Deterrent Link Destroyed

BRITAIN'S SOLE emergency communications link for sending nuclear retaliation orders to Trident missile submarines has been destroyed in a spectacular disaster, breaking up over Topcliffe, north of York.

The emergency system, called Low Frequency Fall Back or LFFB and codenamed SUNFLOWER, used a 'blimp' style tethered balloon or aerostat (illustrated) to lift a 1,500- metre-long radio antenna.

Trident fire control messages are sent by the Cabinet Office and naval headquarters twice a week, using VLF (very low frequency) radio, and following a two-person rule throughout. The balloon would only be needed if all other failsafes have broken or been destroyed.

The primary Cabinet Office and naval nuclear command centre, Codenamed Pindar, was built during the 1980s under the south end of the Ministry of Defence building in Whitehall. It is linked to 10 Downing Street and other government departments by a deep-level tunnel under Whitehall. The "nuclear release" room in PINDAR is connected to two permanent VLF transmitters near Carlisle, whose signals reach underwater.

Once this balloon went up, if for real, former officials anticipated that signals from SUNFLOWER would be the last military event before Britain's rapid fall into a violent struggle for survival and then a decline to pre-medieval living standards and population levels in near-starvation conditions. ■



‘Keep Space for Peace’ (RAF) USAF Croughton rally



INCREASED SECURITY at all US bases in UK meant that the USAF Croughton rally was moved to Broad Street, central Oxford (pictured above). There were 4 speakers: Dave Webb (Global Network), Peter Burt (Drone Wars UK), Shel McDonagh (Fairford Action) and Paul Mobbs (Croughton Watch), joined by a guest speaker from Birmingham.

Broad Street was a good urban site, traffic free, and approximately the same number of campaigners as at Croughton base gatherings handed out leaflets to tourists and shoppers, and supported the speakers who outlined the war like base involvements and issues facing us today and in the future.

U.S.A.F. Croughton is only 20 miles north of Oxford. It 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.

The US recently announced it already has weapons in space. ■

Weapons in Space

THE UNITED STATES has confirmed in a landmark revelation that the nation has deployed operational weapons in space.

The revelation comes as the Trump administration puts a growing focus on space. In 2019, during his first term, Trump created the Space Force as a separate military branch. In his second term, he has announced the ‘Golden Dome’ missile defence system, which includes plans to put U.S. weapons in space.

The US Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability (DARC) with huge radars in Texas, Australia and Wales – (PARCagainst DARC – theteam@parcagainstdarc.com) – where grassroots opposition is massive – would be part of a system to guide anti-satellite weapons (ASATS) to hit targeted satellites in space.

Other options for the US appear to be space-based lasers and electro-magnetic guns to blind or fry spacecraft electronics.

The weaponization of space is a violation of the intent of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. Created by the United States, the United Kingdom and the former USSR, the treaty is an international agreement that governs how nations act in space and it is one of international space law’s foundational documents. The overall purpose of the Outer Space Treaty is to keep space peaceful.

There have been repeated attempts since at the United Nations to pass a resolution titled ‘Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space’ (PAROS) to assure that space be used for peaceful purposes. PAROS “reaffirms the fundamental principles of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and advocates for a ban on the weaponization of space.” It was first passed at the U.N. General Assembly in1981 by a vote of 129 in favour, zero against and 13 abstentions.

But the PAROS agreement to be enacted requires a unanimous vote in favour by the UN’s Conference on Disarmament which consists of 65 nations based on global regions.

The U.S. has continually balked on supporting PAROS, and without unanimity it cannot be approved. The U.S. representative announced the U.S. would not support PAROS. ■

Oxford CND benefit concert 2026



Above: The Oxford Classic Jazz band takes a well-earned break during a great evening.

SEVENTY HAPPY PEOPLE thoroughly enjoyed this years Benefit Concert given by Nick Gill and the Oxford Classic Jazz band at the Oxford Friends Meeting House on Saturday 17th October.

Nick had engaged a very skilled group of jazz musicians, accompanied by great singer Kelly Michaerli, supported by the Lindy Hopper dancers and the evening was a roaring success.

Many thanks to Nick Gill, the band, the singer and dancers for a wonderful benefit evening. ■

NUKEWATCH

UK 'escalating nuclear tensions' with Trident submarines

THE UK GOVERNMENT has been accused of acting "provocatively" by putting three Trident nuclear submarines to sea at once, with campaigners warning that ministers are "stoking up a crisis".

Nukewatch UK which monitors nuclear weapons, reported that three of the UK's four Vanguard-class submarines had set sail from their bases on the Clyde. The submarines are usually armed with Trident nuclear missiles, and it is rare for three of them to be at sea at once.

Peter Burt from Nukewatch UK warned that putting three nuclear-armed submarines to sea was irresponsible. "No doubt the UK thinks that it is sending out signals of strength and resolve over its nuclear posture, but these signals may be interpreted in a totally different way by the Russian government," he said.

"They may conclude that they need to raise their own nuclear forces to a higher state of alert, particularly at a time when other NATO states are conducting nuclear exercises."

Burt accused the UK government of "following Putin's lead and acting provocatively". The consequences of a misunderstanding "could be grave", he argued. "The UK government should be working to improve the international situation, and not stoking up a crisis."

Oxford Peace Remembrance Day

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
November 8th

Bonn Square 1.00pm

Help make Remembrance Day a day to mourn all victims of war and advocate for the ending of all war.

Fairford Action

(RAF) USAF Fairford
Saturday 7th November

No more illegal wars

FAIRFORD MAIN GATES
SATURDAY 7th NOVEMBER
1.00-1.30pm.
To hand in / put up a 'cease and desist' notice
and lay a wreath of white poppies.

Monthly vigil – (RAF) USAF Fairford
Main Gate.
Meet in Faringdon Market Place at 10.30am with placards for peace.
11.00am proceed to Quaker Meeting House for coffee.
12.00-12.30 vigil – Fairford main gate.

Diary

EVERY MISSILE MADE is a theft from THOSE who are HUNGRY

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

November

Mondays – Abingdon Peace Group.
Vigil every Monday – War Memorial 8.15-8.45 Peacemakers.
Wednesday 4th – Faringdon Peace Group – Zoom 7.30 Speaker – Nigel Day.
Saturday 7th – USAF Fairford main gate – Peace Remembrance – 1.00pm.
Sunday 8th – Peace Remembrance – Bonn Square, Oxford – 1.00pm.
13th-15th - Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Nuala 01865 749459.
Saturday 28th – Faringdon Placards for Peace 10.30 / 11.00 / Fairford vigil.

December

Mondays – Abingdon Peace Group.
Vigil every Monday – War Memorial 8.15-8.45 Peacemakers.
Wednesday 2nd – Faringdon Peace Group – Zoom 7.30 – Speaker David Couzens.
11th-13th – 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/events
https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk
Salisbury Vigils virtual tour – https://youtu.be/IOTk0Qm7hWI



Latest News

Brize Norton's £180m runway revamp is built to withstand extreme weather

MAJOR UPGRADES at RAF Brize Norton are nearing completion. These will protect the runway against extreme heat, rain or snow. The runway at the UK's largest military air base is set to reopen in November, having been closed since July.

The project is costing **£180 million** and means the 3km long runway is being fully replaced along with the taxiways being refurbished.

Crews working 24/7 have laid more than 42,000 tonnes of asphalt and installed over 80,000 metres of cabling to modernise the essential airfield, which included upgrades to lighting and drainage systems.

The revamp means the runway is going to be able to deal with the effects of climate change too.

Membership subscriptions 2026

For details of Bankers Orders e-mail: 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**

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Please contact: Nuala Young
nualayoung@hotmail.com

Oxford CND

Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:
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