BITS FROM ABROAD

Senators Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.) introduced a measure on Thursday that would block President Trump's deal to allow **Saudi Arabia** to build a civilian nuclear program. The Democrats' measure is a joint resolution of disapproval, a legislative tool that requires a vote after Nov. 29. The senators expressed concern that the deal gives Saudi Arabia access to U.S. technology for civilian nuclear energy but does not contain sufficient guardrails against Riyadh using that tech to create nuclear weapons.
The Hill 15th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/2s3r8frm

France has fired its latest submarine-launched ballistic missile for the first time from the boat Le Vigilant, with President Emmanuel Macron watching from the deck of a frigate.
UK Defence Journal 6th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/3wfu2sm9

China recently significantly expanded its uranium enrichment capacity. The predominant view of experts and respected non-governmental organizations is that this expansion is needed to supply China's growing civilian nuclear energy sector. … Dr. Hui Zhang, Senior Research Associate at Harvard's Belfer Center, suggests otherwise. China's enrichment capacity, he notes, already is nearly 50% greater than domestic civilian demand. He projects this surplus will climb over the next decade. He also notes that China cannot get to 1,000 nuclear weapons without more highly enriched uranium and estimates that its current uranium enrichment capacity could fuel both its domestic civilian demand and several thousand thermonuclear weapon secondaries.
NPEC 5th Oct 2026
https://npolicy.org/china-uranium-expansion-2603/

Japan says it's time for 'taboo-free' discussions about acquiring nuclear weapons. Defence minister says non-nuclear principles should be revisited given the current global security 'crisis'.
Independent 30th Sept 2026
https://tinyurl.com/27mxte3a

US intelligence assesses that **Saudi Arabia** has not ruled out developing nuclear weapons, raising concerns over a deal to support its civilian nuclear programme.
New Arab 26th Sept 2026
https://tinyurl.com/3yrh36b5

FROM THE MEDIA

Britain is dangerously exposed in the High North to Kremlin spy ships and espionage as tension mounts between the UK and Russia, MPs are warned. 'Glaring gaps' in the UK's military strength in the High North could leave Brits, our nuclear deterrent and crucial subsea pipelines vulnerable to Russian attacks, MPs have warned.
Mirror 22nd Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/ye7w279t

Radioactive traces found in teeth of stranded whales used to explore their lives. Researchers analysed traces of radioactive fallout from nuclear weapons testing trapped in the teeth of five mammals.
Independent 7th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/y8rdc8vv

North Korea will keep its nuclear weapons "forever", its foreign minister vowed Thursday, dismissing the South Korean president's renewed calls for a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. Pyongyang has legally enshrined its status as a nuclear-armed state, with its leadership repeatedly declaring the country's atomic arsenal permanent and irreversible.
Daily Mail 24th Sept 2026
https://tinyurl.com/3h7bn6by

Revealed: Xi's nuclear weapons expansion at seven secret sites. The Chinese president has repeatedly said nations should destroy their stockpiles. China is rapidly expanding its nuclear weapons programme across at least seven major sites despite calling for non-proliferation, a Telegraph investigation has found. Satellite image analysis has uncovered significant construction at nuclear facilities and testing areas across the country. At one site, where China is believed to produce the plutonium triggers designed to activate nuclear weapons, an entire support town has been built, with new apartment blocks, an athletics field, and a bus depot used to transport staff to and from the nuclear site. At another, a 600m-long tube has been built. Experts say it is used to test how nuclear weapons would withstand blasts – for instance, from enemy weapons.
Telegraph 23rd Sept 2026
https://tinyurl.com/mts7t775

Don't forget to check our website: https://wmcnd.org.uk/

TRIDENT AND RELATED NEWS

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.
BBC 19th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/5cud8ynx

As the SNP meet for their annual conference, there can be little doubt the British government sees Scotland as a key frontier in its plans to militarise the nation. Scotland already faces the world with an Anglo-American nuclear weapons system based on the Clyde, so whose interests are served by going further in turning our country into a bunker-state and launchpad for war? … £15 billion (14 times Scotland's annual housing budget) to upgrade Faslane in preparation for a new generation of nuclear weapons; construction of bomb shelters at the base and new docks so it can host more British, US and French nuclear submarines. Plans to build a new munitions factory at Mossmorran where a civilian industry will soon be closed; the return of the US Air Force (USAF) to Lossiemouth for the first time since the Cold War.
The National 17th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/ybk5wznp

Naval Base Commander Clyde and Commodore Andy Bray recently broke ground on a new facility at Royal Naval Armament Depot (RNAD) Coulport to support future classes of Royal Navy submarines…. Built at a cost of £7.75bn per unit, four Dreadnought submarines will replace the current Vanguard ships, which constantly patrol the seas carrying ballistic missiles equipped with thermonuclear warheads.
Herald 14th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/2duefex5

The main planned development for the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Aldermaston is the multi-billion-pound Future Materials Campus, a major long-term construction programme to replace aging 1950s-1970s facilities. … The authority has to give planning permission for the huge new complex, which effectively rebuilds the nuclear bomb factory. The proposals mark the organisation's plans to turn Aldermaston into AWE's main operation.
BBC 15th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/6neun8nr

The Ministry of Defence is being urged to "come clean" about an accident that reportedly destroyed the UK's emergency nuclear war communications balloon… Byline Times reported that the helium balloon, codenamed Sunflower and kept in Scotland, crashed to the ground after deflating during a test over Yorkshire on 4 September. The balloon is designed to lift a 1,500-metre radio antenna enabling the UK government to order Trident submarines to launch a nuclear strike after Britain has been attacked. Both the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the army have refused to make any comment at all, encouraging speculation that the balloon could have been downed by a Russian drone. At the same time, one of the main pieces of evidence about the balloon's history and purpose appears to have been removed from a military website after it was highlighted in Byline Times.
The Ferret 6th Oct 2026
https://www.theferret.scot/trident-balloon-accident/

A powerful new nuclear submarine that embodies the 'best of British' has gone to sea for the first time. HMS Agamemnon, the latest of the six Astute-class hunter killer submarines, has sailed from Barrow where she was built and tested over the past 13 years. She will now conduct trials and training before being sent to HMNB Clyde.
Portsmouth News 25th Sept 2026
https://tinyurl.com/4msuf9su

NUCLEAR POWER

Tanks that held radioactive liquid at Sellafield site for decades have been emptied in a major hazard reduction milestone…The tanks held BUTEX liquor. The liquid is a waste byproduct from nuclear fuel reprocessing, dating back to the 1950s.
Whitehaven News 12th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/4pvpm5dv

A tunnel boring machine has finished digging a 620-metre tunnel which will form part of Hinkley Point C's system for returning fish to the sea. According to EDF, the completion of the five month-long tunnelling project under the Bristol Channel means that, in total, more than eight kilometres of marine tunnels have been dug as part of the new nuclear power plant project.
World Nuclear News 1st Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/35rsrbcn

What's On

November/December 2026

The next **Mailing** is due to be sent out at the beginning of January 2027

The next meeting will be our AGM on zoom. on Tuesday 10th November at 7.30pm
The existing officers have agreed to stand again but other nominations are welcome.
Existing officers are Eric Harley -Chair
Gill Cox -Treasurer
Pam Bishop -Website controller
Patrick Hare Minutes Secretary.
The AGM itself will be fairly brief but will be followed by our usual planning meeting.
All are very welcome to attend but note that to vote you need to be a member of national CND. Please e-mail wmcndall@gmail.com for the zoom link.

Obituary

We were sorry to hear of the death of Brian Rands, a week after a party to celebrate his 100th birthday.

Brian was an early member of Hereford Peace Council and an active, much respected and liked participant in its activities for many years. Not only was he a conscientious and excellent treasurer of the group, but he produced a wonderful edifice on which we could put our posters when we had a stall in High Town in Hereford. In the eighties, he was part of a West Midlands CND delegation to Minsk.

His was a long and productive life. May there be many others like Brian

Jenny Maxwell

Diverse

Britain is deepening its nuclear relationships with the United States, France and Australia, with the Northwood Declaration recognising that there is no extreme threat to Europe which would not prompt a response by both Britain and France, according to the annual update to Parliament published this week. The declaration reaffirmed and strengthened what the update describes as longstanding nuclear cooperation between the two countries. On the AUKUS partnership, the update records an important development in February this year when HMS Anson docked at HMAS Stirling near Perth. The United States is described as Britain's closest defence ally, with the relationship underpinned by long-standing cooperation on all nuclear matters including policy, operations and technology.
UK Defence Journal 19th Sept 2026
https://tinyurl.com/4ccy47xr

When AI researcher Jacob Coxon announced his resignation from Anthropic this month, he warned that people at companies racing toward self-improving superintelligence "earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade." … Although super-intelligence is not precisely defined, AI developers agree it is not yet here. But today's AI systems can cause nuclear war even if people nominally remain in charge. AI need not launch a weapon, recommend a strike, or intend harm. Ordinary human may be enough to lead to catastrophe. AI can shape the information reaching leaders, whose minds are already struggling to comprehend the con-sequences of nuclear war. AI can exploit known vulnerabilities of human judgment compounded by false, misleading, or out-of-context machine outputs and amplified by the speed, scale, and volume of AI-generated information. Even accurate information can be interpreted improperly or unwisely when presented without proper context; errors and ambiguities introduced by AI can make matters worse.
Bulletin of Atomic Scientists 2nd Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/mwmn42e4

Zack Polanski's English and Welsh Greens have been sharply criticised by a raft of leading climate campaigners and scientists for ditching their blanket opposition to nuclear power.
The National 25th Oct 2026
https://tinyurl.com/456at37x