



**OXFORD CND**

**NEWSLETTER**

**January/February 2023**



# **NHS NOT TRIDENT**

**Stop Trident  
Save £205 billion  
Spend it on the NHS**



**Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

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# Season's Greetings?

HOW MANY OF US, I wonder, crossed out the word "Happy" on our New Year cards and substituted the adjective "Happier"? Certainly, the world needs a better twelve months ahead than the last twelve, and we should wish for it in every way we can. But it has not got off to a good start in the Ukraine war, and of the global risks facing us, this is the most challenging.

New Year's Eve and Day were marked by more ferocious Russian missile strikes against infra-structural targets in Ki'iv and other cities. Meanwhile Ukraine launched its own missile strike on a temporary barracks in the occupied Donetsk region, killing between 60 and 400 Russian soldiers (the number is disputed). Neither side paused to



see the new year in. These appalling events were widely reported in a matter-of-fact way as though moral outrage had been exhausted. The Russian efforts to cow the civilian population of Ukraine by denying them heat, water and light go far beyond any "legitimate" military-related targeting, and every missile, every drone, constitutes another war crime. The Ukrainian strike may claim military justification, but should we not mourn the dead soldiers – likely to have been reluctant raw young conscripts, dragooned into Putin's war – and the families who will grieve for them?

Everyone concerned has at various times said that the war will only end through negotiations, although perversely those who then argue that this requires an immediate ceasefire are liable to be accused of playing Putin's – or NATO's -- game. Indeed, as we enter 2023 both the Russian and Ukrainian presidents have said they are willing to negotiate, but only on conditions that are non-starters for the other side.

I need to re-iterate that while we should assess coolly the positions of both sides in this war, there is no moral equivalence between the two. The

folly of NATO expansion may be taken for granted, but it posed no new threat to Russia in 2022, and by annexing Crimea eight years before Putin had already ensured that Ukraine would not be eligible for admission to NATO. The invasion of Ukraine was an act of aggression and an unqualified breach of the UN Charter, while Russian troops have committed numerous war crimes and crimes against humanitarian law.

The hard reality is that, however heinous the Russian action, it could only be completely reversed if the "West" acted against Putin as it did when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in an equally egregious act of aggression (in the long run that did not go well either). Morality aside, to do so again would be suicidal folly – of which the NATO leadership seems well aware.

So, if negotiations are not possible at the moment, the ground has to be prepared for them with intelligent diplomacy and restraint on the ground. There is a great deal we do not know about some vital issues behind this war. What kind of messages are being communicated through back-channels? The only one that we can glimpse concerns the non-use of nuclear weapons, and it seems likely that China has also made that a red line not to be crossed. (However, the true extent of Chinese support for Russia, or hesitancy, is -- as I have found in my recent research -- extremely hard to gauge).

We should not forget that there were real negotiations for some two months a year ago, when various compromise positions were aired, and that interlocutors including President Macron continued to explore these. Some observers on the left believe that these negotiations were spiked by hard-line pressure on Zelensky, principally from Washington and London. This denies agency to Zelensky himself and to the Ukrainian people (at least the majority of them). Even if partly true, the timing suggests that the revelations of Russian war crimes at Bucha and elsewhere played a much larger part in stiffening the Ukrainian position. And Russia in its turn adopts an equally hard-line position.

Both sides are now engaged in tit-for-tat escalation which has a deadly and exponential logic. Finding a negotiated route out will require huge diplomatic skill and should involve the UN, but it is what we should actively exploring for any chance of a Happier New Year. ■

**John Gittings**

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# The 2022 nuclear year in review

A GLOBAL NUCLEAR ORDER in shambles. It is hard to find a year filled with more concerns about nuclear risk than 2022. There surely was 1986 and the Chernobyl reactor accident. There was also 1962 and the Cuban Missile Crisis. And, of course, there was 1945 and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But this year, all sorts of nuclear risks coincided. Russia, losing on the ground, contemplated the use of nuclear weapons in its war against Ukraine – recklessly threatening the nuclear taboo, a 77-year tradition



of non-use. Also, in Ukraine, nuclear reactors and nuclear facilities became targets of military attacks. Elsewhere,

North Korea test-launched more ballistic missiles than it ever had in a single year and even seems to be preparing for a nuclear test. Iran resumed construction of its underground nuclear complex, disconnected IAEA surveillance cameras, and accelerated its uranium enrichment program, leaving it only months away from possibly testing

a nuclear explosive or deploying a crude nuclear warhead on a ballistic missile, if it wishes to do so. In response, Saudi Arabia took further steps toward enriching uranium, also refusing IAEA inspections that would ensure the Kingdom does not conduct covert nuclear weapons-related activities. Despite all these concerns, efforts of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament failed to achieve any meaningful result this year. Participants in the first meeting of states parties of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), also known as the ban treaty, could not agree on calling out Russia's nuclear threats and rhetoric in its war against Ukraine. The long-awaited review conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) ended without an agreement after Russia refused to sign off on an outcome document that referred to the control of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine. The international community, so far, seems incapable of finding ways to better protect nuclear facilities from attacks, even as the odds of a nuclear accident in Ukraine increase as the war drags on. ■

**Bulletin of Atomic Scientists 26th Dec 2022**

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## Trident submarines on prolonged patrols



NEW EVIDENCE THAT Trident submarines have been at sea for a record-breaking five months in 2022 has prompted a former submarine commander to warn of risks to nuclear safety.

Observations at the Faslane nuclear submarine base on the Clyde suggest that two submarines armed with Trident missiles each went out on patrol for 157 days, one from January to June and the other from May to November. That's longer than submarines are previously known to have been at sea. Rob Forsyth, who commanded nuclear submarines with the Royal Navy in the 1970s, said that the strains of such prolonged voyages caused "operating errors", "a breakdown in morale" and posed "a direct threat to nuclear safety." ■

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## Chief Nuclear Inspection 30th November 2022

THE OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION (ONR) has found that challenges remain within the UK's nuclear industry.

At AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield, responsible for the manufacture and maintenance of the UK's nuclear deterrent, progress has been made in ageing facilities management and the site remains in a safe condition, but evidence of its sustained

effectiveness of ageing management is now needed.

ONR is satisfied that AWE is committed to ongoing learning from when it has recognised a potential risk associated with ageing plant and equipment, but the proactive measures were not always delivered in a timely manner. ■

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# NUKEWATCH

## Nuclear convoys November – December 2022

THERE WERE 2 NUCLEAR WARHEAD CONVOYS and 2 Special Nuclear Material (SNM) convoys that passed through Oxfordshire in November and December 2022 (pictured below). These are the most dangerous cargoes on our roads, passing our

towns and cities. Part of one convoy even got lost and drove around in Faringdon. All were tracked by nukewatchers. ■

**Please report any sightings to  
0345 4588 364 or 07824 140058**



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## China's nuclear weapons December 2022

CHINA'S ARSENAL OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS has swiftly expanded; it is now roughly the size of Russia's and America's. That will make for a different – and far trickier – landscape of three-way deterrence. ■

**Economist 2nd Jan 2023**

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## Nuclear fusion – December 2022

YOU REPORT ON the alleged 'breakthrough' on nuclear fusion, in which US researchers claim that break-even has been achieved. To go from break-even, where energy output is greater than total energy input, to a commercial nuclear fusion reactor could take at least 25 years. By then the whole world could be powered by safe and clean renewable energy, primarily solar and wind.

The claim by the researchers that nuclear fusion is safe and clean is incorrect. Laser fusion, particularly as a component of a fission-fusion hybrid reactor, can produce neutrons that can be used to produce the nuclear explosives plutonium-239, uranium-235 and uranium-233.

It could also produce tritium, a form of heavy hydrogen which is used to boost the explosive power of a fission explosion, making fission bombs smaller and hence more suitable for use in missile warheads. This information is available in open research literature.

The US National Ignition Facility, which did the research, is part of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which has a history of involvement with nuclear weaponry. ■

**Dr Mark Diesendorf**

University of South Wales  
*Letters page – The Guardian*  
20th December 2022

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# The Big Lie

I WAS BORN IN 1948, the year the National Health Service (NHS) was created by Clement Attlee's Labour government. It was, in my view, the pinnacle of human achievement. But from the beginning the Tories and their friends in the right-wing media were against it. Winston Churchill's Conservatives voted against the formation of the NHS 21 times before the act was finally passed.

Despite continued efforts to destroy it the NHS has survived – just about. Creeping privatisation now threatens to finish it off once and for all. The NHS is already two-tier, with appalling waiting times for treatment forcing people to have operations done privately. And many choosing to take out private health insurance.

In short we are sliding inexorably into the US system where around 112 million Americans have trouble paying for health care. Health coverage is among the most intensely debated subjects in US life, both because of the generally high cost of healthcare expenses, and because access to coverage varies significantly based on employment and socio-economic status. And people in the UK seem to be blissfully unaware of this pending nightmare.

Of course the Tories and their cronies cannot privatise the NHS overnight, given that there is still such a well of public affection and goodwill towards it. So, they destroy it by stealth, by a thousand cuts. As Noam Chomsky notes: "That's the standard technique of privatisation: defund, make sure things don't work, people get angry, and you hand it over to private capital."

But it doesn't have to be this way.

For as long as I can remember the mantra from

**"That's the standard technique of privatisation: defund, make sure things don't work, people get angry, and you hand it over to private capital." – Noam Chomsky**

successive governments has been: 'We can't afford it.' This is the narrative that is swallowed almost wholesale by an ignorant, gullible public.

This is the big lie.

The money is *always* there. It is simply a case of how you choose to spend it. I cite three examples.

**1. In July 2016, the House of Commons backed the renewal of the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system by 472 votes to 117.** CND has

calculated that replacing Britain's nuclear weapons system will end up costing at least **£205 billion**, and that's before taking into account that Ministry of Defence projects typically go well over budget. My argument is, putting aside the whole question of whether or not we need nuclear weapons, there is clearly £205 billion somewhere in government coffers. How many schools and hospitals would that buy?

**2.** The 2008 economic crash. The UK Office for Budget Responsibility reported the cost of government interventions as **£33 billion** (taxpayers money, almost all of which was to prop up private banks that had caused the problem in the first place).

**3.** Have you noticed how money is always found to fight wars? According to the Ministry of Defence,

**"If we can find the money to kill people, we can find the money to help people."**

**– Tony Benn**

the total cost of UK military operations in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined was **£20.3 billion** (up to but not beyond June 2010). There's the nurses' and ambulance workers' pay rise – with cash to spare.

Tony Benn once said: "If we can find the money to kill people, we can find the money to help people."

The reason the NHS is starved of money is not because we can't afford it but because governments make an ideological choice not to fund it. The Tories (and right-wing Labour MPs) are hell bent on privatisation and de-regulation.

Aneurin Bevan was the Minister for Health in Attlee's post-war government and was largely responsible for the establishment of the NHS. He said: "The NHS will last as long as there are folk left with the faith to fight for it." He also said: "No society can legitimately call itself civilised if a sick person is denied medical aid because of lack of means."

As I write this, nurses are on picket lines, striking for better pay and to defend the very existence of the NHS. Ambulance workers are striking too. It is unprecedented. And a travesty.

But sadly, people are still falling for the big lie. I urge all of you who are able to, to get out onto the picket lines and support our treasured NHS and our wonderful healthcare workers.

Before it is too late. ■

**Alan Hughes**

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# Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp December 2022

## 40th Anniversary of Greenham 'Embrace the Base'

AT THE SEPTEMBER 2021 Aldermaston Women's Camp, we celebrated the arrival of the 40th Anniversary marchers with a roistering Cocktail Party and vastly swelling numbers of women of all ages. The Scary Little Girls theatre group had organised this second march from Wales to Greenham and from then on continued to organise bi-monthly walks from Greenham to the Aldermaston monthly camp. Between us we decided to plan for the anniversary of the Embrace the Base Action in December 1982 when 35,000 women had surrounded the 9-mile perimeter of the US base at Greenham.

This had been a watershed moment for me and for the anti-nuclear movement. Women had been very much seen as non-political and yet here we were, coming out in our thousands to link hands and say no to these offensive and horrific weapons.

Many of us quailed at the thought of asking women to come out and camp in December. As the 2022 weekend approached unseasonably freezing temperatures were predicted. We had decided to echo the original Greenham symbol of spiders and webs but to add another symbol - the mischievous and intelligent crow.

Lizzie from Southampton had set to work designing amazing Spider banners, making puppets for a shadow puppet show and teaching us how to make really effective crows masks.

On the Friday, many women arrived early and set to work putting up tents and the main marquee. In the afternoon some of us went to the Embrace the Tower event at Greenham. Gradually the numbers were growing. We set up two fires encircled by chairs and enjoyed a delicious supper of non-meat balls with the most delicious gravy (vegan), amazing sauces, warming veg and crunchy salad, all catered by Myfanwy, sang and chatted.

The first workshop on Saturday, women clustered around Lizzie's art tables making and painting lanterns and crow's masks. The next workshop we heard about the way tests for Trident had irradiated whole tracts of the native Shoshone Native American lands and how two

of the Greenham, now Aldermaston women, had set off across the desert on one of those occasions to stop one of those tests, nearly ending up at Ground Zero with the military refusing to accept that they were there until the very last minute. The Shoshone people are still living with and dying from the massive overload of radiation there. Two Iranian women also came to speak movingly of the situation in Iran now.

Finally, we created a web with cards on it naming things we thought could make up a good society. The next morning that web was to glisten with frost so beautifully that many photos were taken of it.

In the last of the light, 2 local and 2 Irish Women did a movement event by the fence and then we all gathered, rather anarchically indeed, and processed singing and with our lanterns along the road to the Orion laser testing building. As we stood in a large circle with our lanterns, Rebecca Johnson explained how the building by its very purpose, to create new nuclear weapons, was in itself illegal, breaking the non-proliferation treaty.

By the evening there were about 60 women at the camp including one relatively young wheelchair user and we made a third fire ready to sit around and watch the shadow puppet show, which was a hoot. Rebecca sang some wonderful old Greenham songs and the Crow and the Cradle. Many young women from Oxford were there.

We sat down for our last workshop on Sunday on the massive environmental damage caused by the military even when not at war\*. It was decided that we will devote the March camp to preparation for the XR April event for which we hope to form an affinity group to act as one group of XR Peace. So, any women who care about this - do come to the special camp. You can bring lots of layers and hot water bottles from Friday 10th. March evening to mid-day on Sunday 12th. but you need only come for the Saturday if camping doesn't appeal to you. We will have an accessible loo and ordinary loo. ■

**Nuala Young**

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# XR Quitting actions that disrupt the public

THIS MESSAGE FROM XR is now much more in line with the philosophy and tactics of peace groups. XR is quitting actions that target disruption of the public. In 2023 XR will prioritise attendance and take disruption directly to the UK's seat of power. In 2023 XR are determined to build an even bigger movement of concerned people and concentrate on inclusive actions.

## 21st April 2023 surround Westminster

THIS IS AN INVITATION FROM XR to contribute the strength and experience of the peace movement in a unique opportunity to unite across divides for effective action. Along with the peace movement's focus on war causing climate change, we are also concerned about social justice and the environment. We have long recognised that the climate crisis is connected to all of our social issues; the cost of living crisis is the price of climate inaction. Now is the time for consolidating cooperation between groups, movements and all of humanity.

A fresh approach to politics is needed now, to make the kind of decisions required of us in the 21st century. In order to achieve this, we need to come together, and avoid descending into factional arguments, that divide us when we need to be united. We can only survive through co-operation. XR have recognised this necessity for us to collaborate to create a positive, irreversible, societal tipping point.

The intention is to adapt XR's usual methods to be radically inclusive – for the first time, XR is not aiming for arrests – and instead are demonstrating faith in a critical mass of people to create a moment that's inclusive and impossible to ignore. They are inviting all people, all groups, all organisations to come together and co-design an action which shares the great wealth of knowledge and organising power that our movements have when combined.

The target is for 100,000 people, from all walks of life – to gather peacefully in large numbers at the nation's seat of power, the Houses of Parliament and maintain a continued presence over a number of days.

During those days, contributing organisations can collaborate or carry out their own activities, knowing that there is amplification, support and strength in numbers. Multiple voices will combine

to deliver a coherent message. XR are welcoming non-violent activity which supports their XR demands:

Extinction Rebellion UK is made up of thousands of people active in communities across the country willing to do the work required to drive change and connect with other organisations. The peace movement also has thousands of people active in many different social change organisations. We can join together and become unstoppable.

Aligning with Earth Day, and when Parliament will be in session is sensible; a focus date of Friday April 21st - is suggested.

XR have reached out to the peace movement through XR Peace. We are therefore need your help and participation to mobilise as many people in the peace, anti-militarist and real security movements to take part. We need to plan what our peace bloc will look like and to ensure we can maintain a steady and nonviolent presence throughout the days of the protest.

We would also like to add 2 or 3 of our own demands and thus also want your suggestions as to which would be appropriate. XR Peace are willing to act as a conduit for our peace demands and to work in an alliance of peace groups to enable us to jointly prepare for the 21st April and beyond.

We will join the Alliance and Solidarity Building team that XR have set up to enable many different civil society groups to co-create and collaborate to build a mass movement for April 21st and onwards. This will enable us to keep up to date with the overall plans of XR but also to enable us to work with the many other civil society groups joining the mass demonstration. This will be a people's action not attributable to any one organisation. ■

**PLEASE GET IN TOUCH so we can organise our peace bloc together  
by emailing us at: [xrpeace@gn.apc.org](mailto:xrpeace@gn.apc.org)**



## Diary

### January

**Wednesday 4th** – Faringdon Peace Group – New Year Party – 7.00pm.

**14th** – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp  
Nuala: 01865 749459.

**Tuesday 17th** – Abingdon Peace Group meeting  
8.00pm.

### February

**Wednesday 1st** – Faringdon Peace Group meeting – 7.30pm.

**11th** – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp –  
Nuala: 01865 749459.

**Tuesday 21st** – Abingdon Peace Group – 8.00pm.

### 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>

**Scrap Trident now!**

<b>NHS NOT TRIDENT</b>	<b>JOBS NOT TRIDENT</b>
<b>HOMES NOT TRIDENT</b>	<b>CLIMATE NOT TRIDENT</b>

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## Latest News



**OXFORD CND** IS PLANNING to have a Facebook Peace Page. Do you have the skills to design and organise such a page for the group? If you do, or know someone else who has the skills and would be willing to help, please contact: **Oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop** or **01865 248357** THANK YOU.

### Membership subscriptions 2023

#### Please pay your subscription soon!

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 2023 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 also like to receive it only by email, contact: **oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop**

### Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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### Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:  
Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP  
No later than **Sunday, February 26th, 2023**