

Speakers:

Medea Benjamin, CodePink

Yurii Sheliashenko, Ukrainian Peace Activist

Tariq Ali, Writer & Activist

Rafaella Bolini, ARCI Italy

Kate Hudson, CND

Lindsey German, Stop the War

Chair: Shadia Edwards-Dashti

Medea Benjamin (Code Pink USA)

We are being taken into a world war or a nuclear war. People in the West have tried to stop peace negotiations. The Minsk accord was torpedoed by Ukraine and the West. Nordstream pipeline was blown up by the US with the help of Norway. There is no such thing as a battlefield victory, negotiation is the only way. People of the world have to pressurise governments. President of Brazil says he is not going to send weapons. He argues we need negotiations, not escalation.

Yurii Sheliashenko, Ukrainian pacifist movement

Very supportive of Stop the war. Can be no winners if war escalates.

Rafaella Bolini, ARCI, Socialist organisation in Italy

War is being presented as a normal part of politics. Right wing governments won't stop the war. Nobody has the right to drag us into a world war. There is a big "stop the war" movement in Italy.

Tariq Ali

The Ukrainians are not winning the war. Direct negotiations between Ukraine and Russia are needed. The US is not happy with Germany. Who is really fighting Russia? It is really the US vs Russia, supported by NATO puppets. What are the US war aims? Regime change? They are encouraging Russia to use nuclear weapons. Make no mistake, the UK will be a target in such a nuclear exchange. As the war escalates, so the US and NATO will increasingly make all the decisions rather than the Ukrainians.. The EU has shown itself to be incapable of independent action. We have to change the perception of this war. Britain is a target for a nuclear strike. The longer the war goes on, the more dangerous it becomes. The outcome will determine how US and China's conflicts work out. Quite literally, world peace is at stake.

Kate Hudson, CND

The Doomsday Clock has moved to 90 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been. You would have thought that people would be keen to avoid the possibility of nuclear war. But no, there are constant calls for escalation. Boris Johnson did a really bad job. We are being softened up for nuclear war. There is a disregard for the risks of escalation. Who benefits from the war? Arms manufacturers. The cost is untold. There is an arms sales bonanza. Note a very big petition has got going in Germany calling for negotiations.

Lindsey German, Stop the War

Arms spending has doubled in the last 20 years. This is a war between the NATO and Russia. It is a war of attrition. We are in danger of sleepwalking into a major world war. The Ukrainians do not have the right to drag the whole world into war. The British government has played a really bad role. Volodymyr Zelenskyy's speech was about war, not peace. The government has spent £2.3 billion on Ukraine last year and plans the same for the coming year. This contrasts unfavourably with the £5 million allocated to the Turkish earthquake relief. War with China is getting closer. It is important to stand up and be counted in these circumstances. The problems with the positions of both the Labour Party and the TUC are noted.