

Nigel Day, Oxford CND, and Peter Gloyns, Salisbury CND, attended this meeting representing Southern Region. This report seeks to give you a flavour of what went on.

Tom Unterrainer, Chair of CND, mentioned the new book “Nuclear War - A Scenario” and reported that the film rights had already been sold. This says something about the changing media interest in nuclear matters following Oppenheimer and the rising nuclear tensions in the world. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Nuclear-War-Scenario-compulsive-non-fiction/dp/1911709593>

Kate Hudson, General Secretary of CND, acknowledged the terrible world situation that we are all living through. She noted that it was 6 months since the war in Gaza had started and acknowledged the powerful stance taken by the Secretary General of the UN. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2024-01-15/secretary-generals-statement-the-press-the-middle-east>

The Israeli bombing of the embassy in Tehran will provoke a response from Iran and there is a growing possibility of a new war in Lebanon. These developments need monitoring carefully.

The letter from 600 legal professionals to the government calling for an end to the arms trade with Israel is important. <https://www.legalcheek.com/2024/04/over-600-former-judges-lawyers-and-legal-academics-urge-uk-government-to-suspend-weapons-sales-to-israel/>

She raised the thought of what minister wants to end their career in the dock? Sunak appears to be resistant to such changes of policy and Boris Johnson has now added his voice to the debate. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/06/banning-arms-sales-to-israel-would-be-insane-says-boris-johnson>

It was noted that civil servants have expressed concern about being complicit with these war crimes. [https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/uk-civil-servants-call-halt-arms-exports-israel?](https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/uk-civil-servants-call-halt-arms-exports-israel?nid=350241&topic=Israel%2527s%2520war%2520on%2520Gaza&fid=509216)

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The government continues to refuse to publish the legal advice that it has received on this matter.

It is noted that an Early Day Motion is coming on this topic. <https://cnd.eaction.org.uk/EDM177>. An arms embargo will be a theme for the next big protest march in London next Saturday.

The Ukraine war continues with increasing casualties and Macron has now suggested sending in European troops, which seems certain to lead to a wider war. Trump is bad mouthing NATO and its associated costs. In Germany there are suggestions that a European nuclear weapon is needed, with France and the UK identified as the possible basis for such a development. This seems like a hardly sensible plan, as the US is so profoundly involved in the UK nuclear arsenal. The possibility of Germany

itself developing a bomb has also been floated. The slogan “European Bomb, No Thanks” is being considered.

The latest defence command paper from the government is seen as largely a PR exercise, explaining how great is our deterrent. This position seems somewhat at odds with the reality. There is much talk of our new “Sovereign Warhead” for Trident missiles named *Astraea* after the goddess of justice! <https://breakingdefense.com/2024/03/united-kingdom-reveals-sovereign-nuclear-warhead-name-astraea/>

The submarines supplied under the AUKUS agreement will be the same as the UK uses, with Australia making a major contribution to the costs. There is a new emphasis of the important links between civil and military nuclear power and warm acknowledgement was given to the work of Andy Sterling and his colleagues. https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items/4909-catch-up-19

The position of the trade union Unite was discussed. They have expressed strong support for expansion of the nuclear sector. <https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2024/january/unite-union-government-s-nuclear-plan-urgently-needs-clarity-after-years-of-government-time-wasting>

CND Cymru drew attention to the DARC project that they are opposing. This is to do with increased US militarisation of space. <https://www.cndcymru.org/wp-content/uploads/H86-E.pdf>. They are also getting Peace Champions into local authorities to counter pressure from less peaceful groups!

Dave Webb stressed how bases like Menwith Hill are involved in many ways with both the military use of space and the Israel conflict. He warned how there was a PR campaign about the glories of space that masked the dominant driver for such developments, which are military. He would like people to send him information about local experiences of this PR campaign.

CND will move to new offices in a year's time and they are looking for cheaper premises

A Lakenheath Action Group has been formed and plan a peace camp at the base in July.

The Labour Party doesn't now allow local groups to affiliate with CND. Any local Labour group wishing to either affiliate or donate to CND now has to refer the decision for approval to the central party.

Nukewatch activities were reported and a new report was highlighted about flights of nuclear material between the US from the UK. https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items/4942-declassified-uk-the-uk-military-regularly-flies-planes-carrying-highly-radioactive-material-to-the-us

<https://cnduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Special-nuclear-flights-between-the-US-and-UK-1.pdf>

Nukewatch appealed for more volunteers to track convoys.

The following resolutions were adopted:

1. **Council agrees** to explore increasing its work with existing divestment campaigns and organisations looking to make an impact in this arena – examples include faith campaigning initiatives, and Medact which has recently decided to get involved in divestment work.
2. **CND resolves**
 1. To demand that the next government immediately withdraws the Gove Statement and Tory government policy definitions on extremism and the targeting of MAB and associated Muslim organisations;
 - 2 to work with campaigning and civil liberties groups, and in particular the trade unions, resisting false notions of extremism and supporting the work of the coalition of anti-war movement which includes MAB, to resist Islamophobia as well as the wider attacks on our movement.
3. **CND resolves** to: work with Trade Unions and NGOs to put pressure on the Government, and particularly the next government, to work with the trade unions to invest in a just transition away from redundant and dangerous fossil and nuclear industries.