

The Southern Region of CND is represented on Council by Nigel Day, Oxford CND, and Peter Gloyns, Salisbury CND. This report seeks to give a flavour of the information discussed during the meeting.

Sophie Bolt, the General Secretary

Campaigning context for CND's work and priorities

Lot of fast-moving, serious developments taking place due to impact of Trump's election

Ukraine:

Conflict continues. Both *Russia and Ukraine continue long-range drone and missile attacks, but seem to be observing an informal ceasefire in the Black Sea. Wider ceasefire on energy supplies has not yet materialised.*

Trump's brutal negotiations to secure a settlement between Ukraine and Russia continues or has it stalled? Not clear

Zelensky has yet to sign the agreement with the US which would see the US take control of revenues from oil, gas, nuclear power and Ukraine's vast mineral wealth with still no so called 'security guarantees' to the country. Ukraine working on a new draft agreement ahead of meeting with Trump next week.

Last Sunday Trump threatened tariffs on buyers of Russian oil if no ceasefire deal was reached. By Friday Russian negotiator Kirill Dmitriev said 'significant progress' had been made.

Meanwhile there is Accelerating European & British militarism

Trump's intentions to withdraw military support for Ukraine has been a catalyst for extreme, reckless war-mongering and ramping up military spending towards Cold-War levels.

There have been a rapid array of alarming military plans to secure a ceasefire in a post-settlement situation. After Starmer's 30,000 European troop deployment to Ukraine was shelved, when Trump would not agree to be military back-stop, Starmer and President Macron have now formed the 'Coalition of the Willing', a so-called 'reassurance force' of most European countries, plus Turkey, Australia and Canada, possibly Japan and New Zealand. It would involve troops deployed on land, air and sea. With Macron proposing that the United Nations or the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) should patrol Ukraine's border. Originally named 'Rearm Europe' it's been rapidly renamed 'Readiness 2030' as it has so alienated populations with Macron trying to represent it as 'a pacifist approach' yet the 2030 date is when Europe will be ready to take on Russia or repel such an attack. This is backed by an 800 bn euro loans package for financing a massive re-armament

operation of missile defence, artillery systems, missiles and ammunition, drones and anti-drone systems.

On the nuclear front, Macron has been proposing a nuclear-sharing agreement across Europe. Poland and Germany have publicly supported the initiative. This is a very serious development that could risk French nuclear-armed Rafel jets based in Poland on the border with Russia. It could also mean these jets patrolling European borders. This raises questions about whether such jets could be deployed in Ukraine too.

Germany's new chancellor Merz has also called on Britain to make its nuclear weapons available to Europe. Keir Starmer has been quiet on the matter, given Britain's nuclear dependence on the US.

But in mid March, in an extraordinarily reckless and dangerous show of rhetoric, both Starmer and Healey threatened Russia with Britain's nuclear weapons – with Rear Admiral Chris Parry arguing one submarine can cause the 'incineration of 40 Russian cities'. An obscene and desperate PR exercise on the back of one of the longest patrols – 204 days - of a Vanguard submarine – exposing the difficulty of sustaining Continuous at Sea Deterrent.

Just days before, CND's "Invest in Peace not Nukes" protest took place at the Barrow shipyard. It received good media coverage and good reception from the local community. A good turnout! The news of the Barrow dockyard – not the Town – being awarded Royal status was not popular. Seen as token – not serious investment in town.

The worsening economic situation is driving opposition to militarism

This warmongering is to justify the huge increases in military spending.

The EU and individual European countries like Germany are breaking their own fiscal rules on national debt to increase military spending.

In Britain, since October, the British government has increased military spending by £5.1bn, putting military spending at 2.36% of GDP for 2025/26. And the Office for Budget Responsibility estimated the 3% target would cost an additional £17.3bn per year in 2029/30.

Over 14% of the military budget is allocated to nuclear weapons.

January's Infrastructure and Projects Authority Report showed for a third year in a row Trident replacement programme is 'unachievable'. Rolls Royce not on target with nuclear reactor.

National Audit Office showed that the ten year costs for the Defence Nuclear Organisation – all nuclear weapons programmes - had increased by a whopping 62% on the previous year – just one year – up £38bn to £99.5bn.

These huge increases take place in the context of continued [decline](#) in living standards through lower wages and increasing living costs – as well as ongoing underfunding of public services. They are unpopular across the population, with big majorities supporting decent levels of benefits over defence spending among Labour – 56%, and Green voters 67%.

And that's before the economic impact of Trump's tariffs which will only worsen an already very bad financial situation.

Palestine, Iran

Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the ceasefire agreement occurred on 18th March. Although breaching it all along. Now over 1000 Palestinians have been killed since then. Also again bombing Lebanon. Part of Israel's expansionist plans that are totally backed by Trump.

The British government – moment the ceasefire was breached, Starmer rolled back from statement by Lammy that Israel was in breach of international law, claiming Israel was only at risk of breaching it.

And it's in the context that evidence has emerged that Britain has been authorising export licences to Israel for its nuclear weapons system. Since 2010 – up until present time, it's issued 77 export licences worth £9m of technology for Israel's submarines, which are believed to house nuclear weapons.

Of course, this totally undermines Britain's role as a [sponsor](#) of the landmark 1995 United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East.

Trump nuclear hypocrisy with Iran – latest developments.

On top of this, Trump is threatening to bomb Iran if it doesn't come to an agreement over its nuclear programme. Yet it was, of course, Trump that pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action during his first term in office.

So, CND is organising a side event at the NPT on the urgent need to create a nuclear weapons-free Middle East on Tuesday 29 April.

>> Renewed attacks on the right to protest – focused on attempts to silence movement vs genocide in Gaza and climate action.

1. Amendment to Policing Bill to prevent Palestine marches on Saturdays. Using spurious and unfounded claims of need to protect places of worship. Outrageously presenting an equivalence between far right fascists attacking mosques, with peace protest against Genocide in Gaza, where no evidence of any harassment or intimidation at Synagogues.

2. Quaker Meeting House raided by police to arrest young activists discussing Gaza and climate change.

>> **Trump accelerating development of US Missile Defence.** Preparation to use nuclear weapons – for nuclear confrontation. It was one of his first executive orders—calling it ‘**America’s Iron Dome**’.

Just days after Trump’s inauguration ceremony, the US moved its [Typhon](#) missile system in the Philippines to within striking range of major Chinese military and industrial targets. China has reacted calling it a provocation.

>> **Deepening opposition / challenge to US special relationship**

So Trump’s ‘America First’ policies – trade tariffs against most of the world, including Britain, along with his threat to pull military support from Ukraine, is creating a perfect storm around Britain’s nuclear dependence on the US.

Leading to challenges from broad sections of British political establishment. Much more coverage of the failings of the Trident programme like continuous at sea deterrent, and out of control costs.

So, we managed to get in scrapping Trident into a piece for the Times money and finance section!

Also, the greater concern about this nuclear dependence is creating more opportunities to raise awareness about US plans to site battlefield B61-12 nuclear bombs across Europe and in Britain. And to promote the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace camp starting on 14th April and the fantastic International Peace Conference on Thursday 24th and blockade on Saturday 26th.

So we’ve been working very hard on our legal challenge to expose the nuclear dangers and secrecy surrounding Britain’s military subordination to the US – through NATO - that puts us on the nuclear frontline. As well as Fairford and opposition to US Global Hawk drones, and Brize Norton and other bases too.

Linda Rogers mentioned today’s news that Russian sensors had been found tracking Trident submarines. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2037711/putin-secret-sensors-track-nuclear-submarines>

Kate Hudson highlighted that strong peace actions were taking place across Europe. There has been a large demonstration against the placing of US long range missiles in Germany. Yesterday there was an anti- rearmament demonstration in Italy. There will be an **International Peace Conference on Thursday 24th April** at Lakenheath with speakers coming from Europe, the US and Japan. June sees a NATO

summit taking place in the Netherlands. There will be a counter-summit on 21st June and there has been an important revival of the peace movement in the Netherlands.

David Webb suggested we should be campaigning more strongly for the closure of US bases in the UK. He said that Menwith Hill is supplying targeting information to the Israelis. He said the concept of a missile defence system to protect an area the size of the US was fundamentally flawed. A £250 million contract, named STORM, will look into missile defence within the UK. Germany is heading a European SKYSHIELD project on anti missile defence systems. This is based on the use of Israeli missiles.

Carol Turner emphasised that UK military spending is much larger than the oft quoted figures suggest. Some funds for Ukraine, for example, come from Treasury reserves and don't directly get reflected in the formal defence budget figures. She said war is always preceded by increased military spending and increased jingoism.

Jenny Clegg said that Europe could not possibly substitute for the loss of military spending associated with a US withdrawal from the scene.

Tony Staunton said that Welfare not Warfare and Nurse not Nukes should be at the forefront of what CND is doing.

Tom Unterrainer warned that the Baltic States were preparing to withdraw from the Ottawa Accord, which is an anti-landmine treaty. Germany has changed its constitutional laws to allow more military spending. The EU lending limits are to be increased to allow for re-armament. Militarisation is permeating the culture and there are social media videos extolling the great job opportunities available to young people as a result of this trend. The pieces are being put in place for an attack on Iran.

Nigel Day spoke to the Nukewatch report

Nukewatch

Warhead convoy movements monitored, November - February

- A warhead convoy left RNAD Coulport and travelled south on a two day journey to AWE Burghfield in mid November.
- Individual convoy vehicles, not in convoy formation, were sighted heading north on the M6 in Cumbria in mid January. A few days later a warhead convoy left RNAD Coulport and headed south on a two day journey to AWE Burghfield.

Other convoys monitored

- A special nuclear materials convoy left RAF Brize Norton and headed north along the A34 in mid November, and is thought to have arrived at Rolls-Royce in Derby on the same day.
- Individual convoy vehicles, not in convoy formation, were sighted leaving AWE Aldermaston and heading north on the A34 at the beginning of December.

Other activities

- AWE Burghfield continues to be checked regularly for convoys.

We need your help!

- Nukewatch is always on the look-out for new spotters to help us monitor and track nuclear warhead convoys. If you have a car, live close to a warhead convoy route, and are willing to help watch for the convoy, please let us know by email to spotters@nukewatch.org.uk or by phone on 0345 4588 365.
- If you see a nuclear weapons convoy on your travels please let us know as soon as possible. We need to know what you saw, time and place, and the direction the convoy was travelling in. Please report any sightings to 0345 4588 365 (North), 0345 4588 364 (South) or 07824 140058.
- Information on our activities can be found on the Nukewatch website at www.nukewatch.org.uk, and on Facebook and Twitter/X.
- Nukewatch would like to thank CND Council for their continued support and interest.

Campaigns Plenary

1. Trump, Ukraine, Europe and new nuclear threats

CND Council notes:

1. Trump's election is a catalyst that is emboldening war-mongering political leaders in Britain and across Europe to ramp up military spending towards Cold-War levels.
2. The EU and individual European countries are breaking their own fiscal rules to increase military spending.
3. Macron is proposing a nuclear-sharing agreement across Europe to 'defend' Europe and Ukraine against Russian aggression. Poland and Germany have publicly supported the initiative. This is a very serious development that could risk French nuclear-armed Rafel jets based in Poland on the border with Russia. It could also mean these jets patrolling European borders. This raises questions about whether such jets could be deployed in Ukraine too.
4. Germany's new chancellor Merz is also calling on Britain to make its nuclear weapons available to Europe. Unsurprisingly, Keir Starmer has been silent on the matter, given Britain's nuclear dependence on the US.
5. Trump's ambiguity over continuing military support for Ukraine has drawn attention to Britain's nuclear dependence on US and led to challenges from broad sections of British political establishment. For instance, former Conservatives Defence Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, is proposing that Britain should orientate militarily towards Europe. This is giving rise to greater challenges to the viability of the Trident replacement programme.

CND Council resolves:

- To continue to develop our campaigning against increased military spending, working with MPs, civil society, including Development NGOs, TUs and anti-austerity organisations.
- Work to raise awareness about nuclear threat across Europe and build European-wide opposition to these threats.
- Seize every opportunity to strengthen calls for scrapping Trident.

Amendments**Amendment to motion: Trump, Ukraine, Europe and new nuclear threats**

To CND Council notes, add point 6.

6. As President Macron and Prime Minister Starmer discuss sending troops to Ukraine the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov, has reacted, saying said that NATO troops in Ukraine 'under the guise of 'peacekeepers' would be tantamount to direct, official, undisguised involvement of NATO countries in the war against Russia' and the former Russian President, Dmitri Medvedev has warned it would mean 'war with NATO'

To CND Council resolves, add:

CND write a letter to the Prime Minister stating the risks of sending a so-called peace keeping force to Ukraine

Puts out another statement that escalating the war between the nuclear armed military alliance, NATO, and a nuclear armed Russia is potentially so dangerous

The motion, as amended, was adopted unanimously.