

campaign



Iran nuclear deal

CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** examines why the Biden Presidency has not yet returned to the Iran nuclear deal.

WHEN we speculated about what a Biden presidency would mean for US foreign policy, two things seemed certain: that he would extend the NEW START Treaty with Russia, and that he would go back into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), usually called the Iran nuclear deal. Action was indeed taken swiftly on the NEW START Treaty and Biden and Putin extended it for five years. But US re-entry into the nuclear deal has not gone as hoped, in spite of the other signatory states pressing for its resumption.

On one level it seems a simple matter: Trump pulled the US out, in spite of Iran's full compliance. He then imposed harsh sanctions on the country, impacting cruelly on the population, even putting sanctions on a company developing a Covid-19 vaccine. As a result Iran began to increase the level of uranium enrichment beyond the 3.67% allowed by the agreement. In January the nuclear facility at Fordo began enriching up to 20%; enrichment to 90% purity is required for weapons-grade material. Common sense would suggest that as the

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US began the negative trend, then it should start the restoration process by ending the sanctions, then Iran should come back into full compliance, thus restoring the agreement.

But when it comes to global politics, it seems that 'simple' is not an option. Getting the agreement back on track is fraught with problems, seemingly over the sequencing of the return. The EU has invited the US and Iran to talks, but Iran says it won't come as Washington hasn't done enough to lift sanctions, and the US says it will only discuss what it would take to lift the sanctions at the negotiating table and not before.

This approach by the US

seems unreasonable. It looks as if the US is trying to take advantage of Trump's sabotage of the JCPOA to press Iran for further concessions outside the scope of Obama's 2015 agreement.

I don't always agree with articles in the US journal *Foreign Affairs*, but in a piece published this week, Professor Vali Nasr from Johns Hopkins University urges Biden to quickly resurrect the nuclear deal or risk 'a full-blown crisis in the Middle East'. This is very sound advice, for as he goes on to say, 'with diplomacy off the table, Iran and the United States could very well end up in a shooting war that neither wants or can afford.'

Spotlight

**This month
Salisbury CND**



Salisbury CND is having a busy year, despite the on-going restrictions. As well as organising a fantastic webinar about the links between civilian nuclear power and the military demand for nuclear engineering (watch it on www.cndsalisbury.org.uk), the group has been celebrating the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entering into force by producing commemorative mugs.

This reminder of the historic day can be ordered from Salisbury CND, or it could be an idea for your group to consider as well.

■ If you would like to get in touch with the group (either to discuss campaigning ideas or as a local CND supporter wanting to get involved), contact 01722 321865 or c.lanyon@btinternet.com.

NUCLEAR BAN
what's next?

Contact your MP **Get your council signed up** **Sign the petition**

Information – cnduk.org/tpnw

Fukushima: 10 years on

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, CND Campaigns Director **Sara Medi Jones** looks at how the incident should act as a warning for the UK.

TEN YEARS AGO, I was sight-seeing in Berlin when I received a text from a friend telling me to check the news, as something ‘bad’ had happened in Japan. A quick glance at my phone (mobile data abroad was expensive back then!) and I carried on my way to the Brandenburg Gate – yes, an earthquake was devastating for the local population but the full impact of what was to unfold was not yet clear.

By the time I returned to my hotel that evening however, it was clear that we were witnessing the most serious nuclear incident since Chernobyl. The earthquake had caused the reactors at the Fukushima nuclear plant to shut down and the tsunami which followed flooded the emergency generators, cutting power to the pumps which circulate cooling water to stop the reactors from over-heating. The ensuing explosions released dangerous radioactive materials into the atmosphere, an incident classified as a Level 7 – the highest possible – on the International Nuclear Event

Scale. 8% of the Japanese landmass was contaminated by radiation fallout from the disaster.

A decade on, a survey shows that 74% of residents in Fukushima Prefecture believe the situation at the plant is ‘not promising’. The company that owns the plant wants to dump contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean, it is believed more than 50,000 people are still unable to return to their homes, and radioactive hotspots still threaten public health.

So could a similarly devastating nuclear accident take place in the UK? Japan after all is a highly-advanced, industrial nation with traditionally high safety standards. The problem is that there can never be a complete guarantee of human and environmental safety when using such a dangerous technology as nuclear. While accidents can and do occur in any industry, the radioactive materials used in the nuclear one mean that safety breaches often have far-reaching and long-lasting repercussions.

Add to that the fact that

nuclear power is economically unviable, produces radioactive waste with no solution in sight as to how to deal with it, and is unpopular with the public (only 32% of the public support according to the most recent government survey), and you have to ask, why is the government so intent on developing this white elephant of an energy source?

The links between nuclear energy production and nuclear weapons are being increasingly explored and highlighted, and it could well be that government support for a failing nuclear power industry is a secret subsidy for already over-priced weapons of mass destruction.

Another earthquake hit Japan last month, causing radioactive water to leak from the Fukushima plant (although not outside the reactor building). This is a stark reminder that the people of Fukushima still need international support on the tenth anniversary of the disaster, and an even starker reminder that this technology will never be truly safe.

Budget 2021

Today's budget did little to address healthcare and the climate emergency – the very priorities the UK government should be focussing on when addressing the real threats to our security.

Instead the government insists on wasting billions on replacing Trident.

To face the current crisis caused by Covid-19, we need an economic plan which truly prioritises society's needs.

Banning the Bomb, Smashing the Patriarchy: 22 March, at 7pm.

An evening with Ray Acheson and Scottish CND.

■ To register contact:
scnd@banthebomb.org

Lockdown livestreams

If you've missed any of CND's webinars over the past year, they're all available to watch on CND's website, including our most recent with Hiroshima survivor Mr Miyake Nobuo.

■ See <https://cnduk.org/cnds-lockdown-seminars/>.

Meet the staff

This month: Matt Fawcett, Yorkshire CND Campaigner

"Being a regional campaigner can mean being a bit of a 'Jack-of-all-trades' – as well as campaigning, you do a little office and volunteer management, research, membership, merchandising, organisational finance and whatever else needs doing. So it's certainly never boring!

We're extremely fortunate in Yorkshire to have some very strong local groups and an excellent co-ordinating group who have been full of creative ideas to keep up the campaign pressure during lock-down.

The entry into force of the TPNW has been a major boost and we're pushing hard on our pledges for MPs, local and parish councillors as well as faith leaders, to build support for and awareness of the treaty. We rely on our members and supporters to really reach local politicians and so the office must ensure they have everything they need to campaign effectively. With this in mind, this month my task is a new website to better organise our materials and track our progress – look out for the launch later this month."

Get in touch!

YCND out of office number: 05603 640753



CND continues to arrange mainly virtual events. Keep checking our website and social media accounts.

Temporary office closure

Please note that due to the national lockdown, the CND national office in London is temporarily closed while the new restrictions apply. All staff are still working remotely, and all should be able to get back to you on email. To contact the office staff, please email enquiries@cnduk.org or phone 07891 870732 and you will be re-directed to the right person.

The office closure means that we will be unable to send materials or shop orders. We will also not be receiving post, so please be patient if you are awaiting acknowledgement of a donation made by post.