

campaign

UK to send weapons-grade uranium to Australia



CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** looks at the government's latest breach of international law.

THE GOVERNMENT has signed us up to AUKUS – a new trilateral military alliance with Australia and the US. Billed by the signatories as ‘a landmark defence and security partnership’, it actually means that the US and UK are going to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines. This is enormously controversial.

Boris Johnson claimed in Parliament that the new agreement does not contravene the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – as AUKUS involves nuclear power not nuclear weapons so the restrictions do not apply. The new subs will have on-board nuclear reactors but not nuclear weapons – and the Australian PM Scott Morrison has been quick to insist

that Australia will not be pursuing either nuclear weapons or civil nuclear capacity.

But the fact is we are talking about providing weapons-grade enriched uranium to a non-nuclear weapons state to power military submarines undertaking provocative action in a very fraught area of the world.

The NPT does not stop the exchange of civil nuclear technology but it stipulates it must be ‘for peaceful purposes’. Sending war-fighting subs to potential conflict in the Indo-Pacific region is hardly that. This is yet another breach of international law by our government, hard on the heels of the nuclear arsenal increase.

They are many questions still to be

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answered. Will the Australians build the subs or buy them in? How will the highly enriched uranium necessary to fuel the reactors be provided? There is no doubt that the provision of reactors and the technology they require is the most significant factor here.

Reactor technology is highly prized and top secret, as the uranium used for the reactors is enriched to 95% – weapons grade. The US and UK cooperate on this under the terms of the Mutual Defence Agreement, the world's most extensive nuclear sharing agreement which first came into force in 1958. Renewed by parliament every decade, the last time in 2014 allowed for greater cooperation on reactor technology. If the Australians are going to build the

reactors, they will need US technology and expertise and their own nuclear-sharing agreement with the US. So the simplest solution would be to buy them in; Boris Johnson's comments so far about jobs suggest he will try and get reactor orders for the Rolls-Royce factory in Derby. Maybe he will also try for the decommissioning contracts for the spent fuel that eventually needs disposing of. Presumably it will add to the nightmare build-up of radioactive waste at the dangerously unsafe Sellafield complex in Cumbria. Highly enriched uranium is stored there but no safe long-term storage facility has yet been found.

It's time to stand up and oppose the government's reckless policies.

Meet the staff

This month:

Rachel Earlington, Parliamentary Officer

An important part of my role is working with Members of Parliament to take a stand against Trident and its replacement as well as helping CND groups and members with lobbying their representatives.

With conference season nearly over, I'll be engaging with MPs and Peers through Parliamentary CND – a cross-party group working together to hold the government to account. Since the announcement of the Integrated Review in March we have continued to work together by tabling questions, submitting Early Day Motions and having online meetings, in order to tackle this government's dangerous stance on nuclear weapons.



Spotlight

This month
Join your local group!



We want to say a huge thank you to CND groups who marked the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons with action at nuclear sites across the country. The protests looked fantastic and really captured the Nurses not Nukes spirit, many receiving coverage in the local press.

From Aldermaston to Faslane, Fylingdales to Barrow-in-Furness, the Rolls-Royce plant in Derby to Devonport, the message was clear – we don't want more nuclear weapons, in fact we don't want any!

Our groups are the lifeblood of CND. If you're not already involved with your nearest one, why not take a look at our map and get in touch? www.cnduk.org/local-groups/

Conference round-up 2021

CND Parliamentary Officer **Rachel Earlington** reports back on this year's party conference season.

WHAT HAPPENS to Trident if Scotland becomes independent? The answer to this crucial question has become clearer after this year's Scottish National Party (SNP) conference. A motion written by SNP CND was adopted with overwhelming support. It called upon the government of an independent Scotland to set out a timescale to remove nuclear weapons from Scotland within three years. It also committed that government to ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at the earliest opportunity.

CND's presence at this year's in-person Labour Party conference meant that we were able to engage directly with delegates, MPs and attendees. We also had a successful fringe event which featured guest speakers CND Vice-President Jeremy Corbyn, Vice-Chair of Parliamentary CND Bell Ribeiro-Addy and Labour's Shadow Peace and Disarmament Minister Fabian Hamilton. We focussed on what could be done to oppose the government's decision – announced in the Integrated Review earlier this



Nurses not Nukes bloc organised by Greater Manchester CND at Tory Party Conference

year – to increase the UK's nuclear arsenal.

A high point of this year's conference – thanks to the hard work of Labour CND – was a motion opposing the new AUKUS military pact; it was passed with an overwhelming majority. AUKUS is a dangerous agreement which will see the US and UK supply Australia with nuclear-powered submarines – including reactors fuelled with weapons-grade uranium. The motion stated that the pact breaches the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). AUKUS is strongly opposed by the Maritime Union of Australia, who are calling for spending on jobs and health rather than nuclear submarines. The

motion passed with 71% in favour and 29% against. This is a strong indicator that the membership continues to be overwhelmingly anti-nuclear.

The conference speech by the Shadow Defence Minister, John Healey, fell far short of prioritising the real threats to our security such as climate change and the pandemic. Instead he doubled down on the supposed importance of NATO, nuclear weapons and military spending; he failed to mention the government's nuclear arsenal increase which breaches the NPT, thus breaking international law.

The Conservative Party was back in Manchester for its annual conference last weekend and met with an 'unwelcomed' protest. It was fantastic to see many supporters show up to the 'Nurses not Nukes' bloc organised by Greater Manchester CND.

Our messaging was clear: oppose the government's plans to increase the UK's nuclear arsenal; stop them spending more than £205 billion on Trident's replacement! This is money that would be better spent on our NHS!

Getting back on the streets – Yorkshire CND regional campaigners' meeting

6 October, 6pm

Online. To register contact:

■ info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

New nuclear: What's at stake for wildlife?

7 October, 7pm-8:30pm

Online. To register contact:

■ gmdcnd@gn.apc.org or 0161 273 8283

West Midlands CND meeting

12 October, 7:30pm

Online. To register contact:

■ wmcndall@gmail.com

International Peace Bureau conference: (Re)imagine our world

15 October-17 October

Online/Barcelona

■ To register contact:

information@cnduk.org

Yorkshire region Don't Bank on the Bomb Day of Action

29 October

■ Contact:

info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

Yorkshire CND Peace and Craft Fair 2021

27 November, 10am-4pm

Victoria Hall, Saltaire, Shipley, BD18 3JS

■ Contact

info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk



Climate not Trident Take action for COP26

CND is proud to be part of the movement calling for urgent action to deal with the climate threat. The next opportunity to show our support for this demand is in November, as Glasgow hosts the next UN Climate Change Conference – COP26. The main day of action will take place on 6th November with numerous events taking place, including in London – join the CND banner at noon at Bank, marching to Trafalgar Square for a rally.

Protests and actions are taking place across the country, find out more at www.cnduk.org/cop26/



CND Conference 16th and 24th October 2021 No new nuclear arms race

Join us for CND Conference, which will be held online due to the ongoing uncertainties of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Saturday 16th: Have your say at our AGM and Policy Conference; deadline for registration Thursday 7th October.

Sunday 24th: join in the discussion and debate at the public event.

11am: The global impact of the UK's illegal nuclear arsenal increase Will the 40% increase in nuclear warheads lead to a new arms race? Will it increase the risk of nuclear war?

Speakers: Professor Paul Rogers from the UK; Vijay Prashad from the Tricontinental Institute in India and across the Global South; Colonel Ann Wright from Veterans for Peace in the US; and Ruth Rohde from the Arms Information Centre in Freiburg, Germany.

Chair: Tom Unterrainer CND.

1:45pm: Britain and the TPNW: time to acknowledge past wrongs With the TPNW now in force, Britain needs to take a long look at the legacy of its nuclear weapons testing, how it can remediate that, and what it must do to sign up to the TPNW. Speakers: Talei Lusia Mangioni, a campaigner for a Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific; Rebecca Johnson, who has worked extensively on the UK and TPNW compliance; and Alan Owen, from Labrats, campaigning with nuclear test veterans.

Chair: Kate Hudson CND.



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