

CAMPAIGN

February 2026 | The magazine of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament



INSIDE:

Asad Rehman on uniting against the climate disaster

Micaela Tracey-Ramos: peace is trade union business

Sophie Bolt: end Britain's nuclear expansion

Helen Jaccard: START Treaty – What could go wrong?

Updates from campaigns across the country

Alan Owens: the human cost of nuclear testing





LET'S END BRITAIN'S DEADLY NUCLEAR EXPANSIONISM

CND General Secretary **Sophie Bolt** explains why we must protest the government's decision to buy nuclear-capable fighter jets.

Without any parliamentary debate, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced Britain's purchase of 12 US F-35A nuclear-capable fighter jets at the NATO summit in June 2025. This decision marks a very significant expansion in the country's nuclear capability, enabling Britain to launch nuclear weapons from both the sea and air. Far from protecting the British population, buying these nuclear jets will increase the risk of nuclear war. It will tie Britain even further under US military command and breaches international disarmament obligations. The 12 F-35A fighter jets are just the first tranche of purchases: the government intends to buy a total of 75 F-35A nuclear-capable jets over the 40-year lifetime of the fighter jet programme,

costing over £71 billion. This means even more public money going to US arms companies for war and nuclear weapons.

The government doesn't want you to know what's going on at the base. It doesn't want you to know about the role of the base in transporting F-35A parts made in Britain direct to Nevatim in Israel. It doesn't want you to know about its role in US-led illegal wars on Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan. And it certainly doesn't want people knowing about these new nuclear jets!

That's why on Saturday 28 February, CND will be shining a spotlight at RAF Marham – the

hub for the F-35 fighter jet programme, where these nuclear jets will be stationed.

Protests at military bases are vital and have a rich history in Britain. It is public protest that has forced governments to withdraw nuclear weapons and close bases. And, with the threat of nuclear war the highest it has been since the Cold War, it is absolutely vital that we do it again!

Threats from US President Donald Trump towards the sovereignty of countries like Greenland make the world far more dangerous. Trump's actions are also putting

Opinions expressed by authors in *Campaign* are their own, and do not necessarily reflect the policies of CND.



more pressure on the British government to stand up to his aggressive 'America first' strategy. Britain's so-called 'special relationship' with the US is rightly being challenged, including Britain's dependence on the US for its nuclear weapons systems.

Buying these US F-35A fighter jets would tie Britain even closer to Trump. This is because the jets can launch US nuclear B61-12 bombs. These bombs are designed specifically to be used on the battlefield against troops and conventional weapons. Experts argue the design of these B61-12 bombs increases the chances of nuclear war.

Keir Starmer's announcement that Britain was purchasing these US jets was made without any debate or vote in parliament. The government has also refused to answer questions about the stationing of US nuclear bombs at RAF Lakenheath – just a few miles from RAF Marham. This nuclear

secrecy undermines British sovereignty and democracy. It is about hiding the dangers of these weapons and their enormous public costs.

The protest calls on the government to instead invest in real human security like health, education and climate action. That's why trade unions like the University and College Union as well as the Fire Brigades Union, representing emergency services personnel, are publicly backing the protest.

Buying Trump's jets to drop his bombs has nothing to do with keeping Britain safe. It increases the risk of

nuclear weapons being used and puts us on the nuclear front line of a US war.

So join us at RAF Marham and help us increase the pressure on the British government to break this deadly military alliance with the US, reverse this reckless decision to buy these US nuclear jets and instead take action to tackle the real security issues we face from climate breakdown and rising social deprivation.

- For more information on the protest – including travel details – contact information@cnduk.org or phone the CND office on 020 7700 2393.

**STOP BRITISH
NUKE JETS**

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

RAF Marham
Saturday 28th February


CND





WHY PEACE IS TRADE UNION BUSINESS

Micaela Tracey-Ramos, UNISON NEC Rep for Young Members, examines why the government's high military spending is bad for our communities.

As our members grapple with chronic underfunding, collapsing public services, and a cost-of-living crisis, the Labour government's Strategic Defence Review, branded *Making Britain Safer: secure at home, strong abroad*, arrived at a moment when working class communities are already stretched to breaking point. Yet instead of prioritising public services, welfare, or climate action, the government is choosing to funnel billions of pounds into militarisation. For trade unionists this drive to war is a direct threat to the living standards and security of our members. Peace is, and always has been, trade union business.

Despite entering government with a mandate for transformative change,

Labour has doubled down on austerity. Meanwhile, public services remain in crisis. Trade unionists see the consequences of this every day: understaffed hospitals, overstretched councils, and communities left without essential support. Against this backdrop, the government's decision to ramp up defence spending is not just misguided – it is a political choice that diverts resources away from the people who need them most.

The Strategic Defence Review frames Britain as moving to a “war fighting readiness” to deter threats in the Euro Atlantic. Defence Secretary John Healey has pledged to make the British Army “ten times more lethal”, backed by investment in long range weapons, software, and

missile systems. A further £1.5 billion will fund six new munitions factories, supposedly creating 1,800 jobs – a tiny return on a massive public investment.

Whipped up threats are used to justify this, along with the need to ‘send a message’, and Britain's commitment to NATO. Britain's deepening alignment with NATO and EU military structures has tied its foreign policy to a cycle of intervention and conflict. The ongoing genocide in Gaza, and Britain's complicity with it by supplying arms, illustrates the human cost of militarisation. Successive governments have tried to normalise war as inevitable. But it is not. Britain could choose diplomacy, cooperation, and peace building – choices that would genuinely enhance



security at home and abroad. There is an alternative.

Published by the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) Trade Union, the *Alternative Defence Review* challenges the dominant war narrative and offers an alternative vision for peace, justice, and security.

It examines how militarisation has distorted national priorities, fuelled global instability, undermined international law, harmed the environment, and diverted investment from public services and social infrastructure. It shows that increased military expenditure will be economically inefficient, environmentally destructive, and socially regressive, offering limited job creation while stifling a more sustainable and just economy.

Supporters of increased defence spending often claim it will stimulate economic growth. But as the *Alternative Defence Review* shows, the evidence tells a different story. Military

spending has a far smaller economic multiplier than investment in social infrastructure. Building bombs and tanks does not improve productivity, raise living standards, or generate sustainable economic activity as it does not expand the productive capacity of the economy.

By contrast, investment in public services – health, education, social care, green infrastructure – creates long-term prosperity and strengthens communities. The idea that defence spending is ‘job rich’ is a myth promoted by the arms industry itself. If the government truly wanted to create well paid, socially useful jobs, it would invest in the services that keep society functioning, not

in weapons designed for destruction.

But the peace movement within the trade union movement needs rebuilding. Debates about wealth taxes and public spending cannot ignore the vast sums being channelled into defence. Militarisation is not a side issue – it is central to the economic choices shaping our society.

As trade unionists, our message must be clear: we oppose the drive to war and the expansion of arms production. We demand an alternative rooted in peace, diplomacy, and investment in the working class. Britain’s young people need jobs, homes, and hope – not bombs.



TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

CND groups across the country are stepping up their campaigning at this crucial time. Read on for a grassroots update.

What can one person do in response to the increasing flashpoints of international conflict? I'm sure this thought has crossed many of our minds over the past year as we've witnessed nuclear dangers increase. And the answer for many is to join like-minded people in your community to take a stand. CND groups across the country have been stepping up and thinking of more ways to make our case for a more peaceful world.

New groups are being set up as well, with the most recent being **Finchley CND** who have hit the ground running with some fantastic initiatives. There are also ongoing discussions about setting up a **Swindon CND** and a new group in Leek, as well as re-establishing CND groups in both **Stafford** and **Stoke-on-Trent**. **Cambridge CND** is another relatively new group, and they have

already been successful in making connections in the city and organising well-attended meetings.

We've been finding that new projects can reinvigorate support in existing groups with plenty of interesting work taking place across the country. **Nottingham CND** has digitised absolutely fascinating and inspiring videos of the group participating in direct action in the 1980s

(available on YouTube, contact nottscnd@gmail.com for link). These short films show how the need to protest military bases is as critical as ever. The group also organised a screening in the local cinema.

Yorkshire CND also find film screenings a great action that local groups can take. Regarding ideas for a slightly different way of campaigning, the region has been



GMD CND at Barrow





distributing beer mats across Yorkshire, starting conversations in venues as they go (contact info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk if you would like some) and collaborating with a Food Not Bombs groups to give out free vegan food on the streets of Leeds. **Christian CND** marked the 80th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima by commissioning an art installation for Coventry Cathedral.

As we develop ways of engaging with new support in our towns and cities, the traditional rally is as important than ever. **Greater Manchester & District CND** mobilised for a demonstration at Barrow-in-Furness by organising public

meetings, telephoning every member, reaching out to trade union networks, leafletting campuses and other demonstrations, and putting out social media reels to promote it. It paid off, with a strong delegation voicing their support against Britain's nuclear weapons.

We want to share these ways of working amongst

all the CND groups, which is one of the reasons we've introduced regular online organising meetings. These meetings will evolve depending on the needs of groups, so come along and let us know what is useful to you (details of the next one will be emailed).

Thanks to all of you who are spreading the campaign for a world without nuclear weapons in your communities. Remember that together we are stronger.

Spotlight on new CND member: Hibah Yasin

"I first learnt about CND through my involvement with the Palestine movement. I became interested in the campaign as the cause is not only relevant to Palestine, but important and relevant on a global scale. I attended CND's national conference in 2024, where I learnt more about the scale

of destruction that nuclear weapons can cause. Since then, I have joined CND and attended protests at RAF Marham and RAF Lakenheath."





ARMS CONTROL TREATY TO EXPIRE – WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

Helen Jaccard is a member of WILPF Disarm Committee and Veterans For Peace. Here she looks at the options for the future of New START.

New START, the only remaining nuclear arms control treaty between Russia and the United States, expires on 5 February this year. New START was only designed as a stepping stone to a broader treaty and has many limitations. Nonetheless, it symbolises an off-ramp from an all-out arms race and stops the US and Russia from deploying their full stockpiles of over 3500 warheads each.

Extending New START limits

New START cannot be extended because the treaty text does not allow for this. It must be replaced. The US and Russia claim they are still in compliance with the treaty's limits, but as inspections ceased in 2022, the warhead count

of each country cannot be verified.

Extending the terms of New START could give some breathing room to negotiate a new treaty.

Intentions to keep arms control

On multiple occasions both US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin have expressed interest in abiding by the terms of New START past its expiry date. Point 17 of Trump's 28-point Ukraine

peace plan (with Russian input) states: *"The US and Russia will agree to extend the validity of treaties on the non-proliferation and control of nuclear weapons, including the New START Treaty."* With the US and Russia still at war in Ukraine, however, no visible progress has been made on the arms control front.

What is needed immediately:

- A one-year moratorium on exceeding New START caps;
- A resumption in inspections of deployed warheads;
- A moratorium on deploying new Anti-Ballistic Missile systems, such as Trump's Golden Dome, which neutralise retaliatory deterrence and make a first strike more likely. The Golden



Dome is a proposed space-based missile defense system for the US, intended to detect and destroy ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missiles before they launch or during their flight.

Fortunately, resolutions introduced in the US Congress call on the US and Russia to adhere to the limits of the Treaty after the expiration of New START and pursue a follow-on arms control treaty.

A new nuclear arms control treaty could:

- Further reduce the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons;
- Reduce stockpiled and tactical weapons;
- Halt new missile defense systems development;
- Halt weapons in space, cyber warfare and autonomous weapons.

Longer-term: Eliminating nuclear

weapons entirely!

The Veterans For Peace Nuclear Posture Review supports the United Nations' Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It points out that progress toward nuclear abolition is unlikely as long as the US government continues to pursue a policy of global hegemony.

Extending New START is just one step in a long process towards peace and security for everyone on earth. Let's get busy!



WE MUST UNITE AGAINST THE CLIMATE-WRECKING ELITES

Asad Rehman, chief executive of Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, argues for connecting the climate movement with the campaign for peace.

Just weeks into the new year, US President Donald Trump ordered a military assault on Venezuela, boasting that the US will run the country. But taking oil isn't liberation, it's looting. It's this same

extractive logic that has long poisoned the planet.

Friends of the Earth is a global environmental justice movement, and our sister groups in the global south have seen

this playbook time and again – governments overthrown, resources stolen, people and places sacrificed for profit. US foreign policy today has become flagrant colonial exploitation.





We believe the struggle for climate justice cannot be disentangled from the struggle for peace, disarmament and global solidarity. At the very moment where we need to put a block on planetary destruction, governments motivated by fossil fuel addiction are instead accelerating it. They are perpetuating fossil fuel extraction and consumption which leads to carbon emissions, the primary driver of climate change. But they are also failing to invest in tackling climate change and are instead pouring billions of pounds into military funding that enables the colonisation, plunder and extraction of resources from the global south.

The global military carbon footprint is about 2,750 million tonnes CO₂e, roughly 5.5% of global emissions, making armed

forces the fourth-largest emitter globally.

NATO's emissions in 2023 alone were 233 million tonnes

CO₂e – surpassing the emissions of many countries. The UK Ministry of Defence reports 3.1 million tonnes CO₂e for 2022-23, about 50% of central government emissions. But Declassified UK and Scientists for Global Responsibility estimate the total carbon footprint of the British military and supply chains is closer to 11 million tonnes CO₂e – more than the emissions of six million cars.

The military-industrial complex in the UK emits more greenhouse gases than 60 entire countries, many of them climate-vulnerable states.

The same forces that are tearing up international law are tearing up human rights and climate treaties. Science, solidarity and co-operation are their obstacles, and we all pay the price as land and resources are exploited and those whose lives

and livelihoods stand in the way are seen as disposable.

Friends of the Earth stands with our sister group in Palestine as a genocide unfolds which is only possible by the rest of the world turning its back while human rights conventions are torn to shreds. We cannot be surprised when Israel's biggest backer, the US, now goes on the rampage in Latin America for oil and is setting its sights on Greenland and its minerals.

Our leaders in the UK and in Europe, who allowed the Trump playbook to be enacted on the people of the global south, should not be surprised that it is being threatened against a supposed ally.

We need a new, better way forward that puts people and planet before profit, climate breakdown and war. We must de-escalate division and rebuild global co-operation. We must unite in solidarity for humanity and nature, against the climate wrecking practices of the fossil fuel industries that profit from conflict and military build-up.





THE HUMAN COST OF NUCLEAR TESTING

Alan Owens, co-founder of LABRATS, explains the impact of nuclear testing and why the government must apologise.

Nuclear testing programmes across the world have had major impacts on the affected communities. Veterans, scientists, civilians, and indigenous communities have all been impacted, and continue to be impacted, by the testing of these weapons.

Here in the UK, these communities seek access to medical records, blood test results, and radiation exposure data held by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Research by Dr C Hill and Dr J Hogg has shown that the persistent loss, restriction, or withholding of these medical records has had a profound and lasting consequence for veterans and their families. These consequences include adverse impacts on health outcomes, trust in

the state, psychological wellbeing, family relationships and the pursuit of justice.

Approximately 22,000 British servicemen took part in the British testing programme. For these families, there has been no closure. The average age of a surviving British nuclear test veteran is 86. Many families are attempting to reconstruct their fathers' or grandfathers' experiences, trying to understand why the UK government is still the only testing country not to formally apologise and introduce a financial redress scheme.

Veterans have suffered from various cancers (leukaemia, liver,

bone, brain), infertility, blood disorders, and heart disease. Many have experienced miscarriages, stillbirths, congenital heart defects, limb deformities in their children, crumbling teeth in grandchildren, and other autoimmune diseases, which have all contributed to their mistrust of the state. Veterans report autoimmune and blood disorders such as



anaemia and Graves' disease, musculoskeletal and skeletal issues such as 'crumbling' skeletons, bone spurs, severe arthritis, organ and sensory damage, thyroid disease, heart disease, diabetes, and premature tooth loss.

The sense of harm caused by the withholding of information and the denial of any wrongdoing has brought together communities across the world, with many collaborating on projects. A new documentary by cinematographer Daniel Everitt Lock, 'Our Plant, The People, My Blood', shows the injustice faced

by nuclear test veterans and shows the impact on communities in the UK, Australia and America. Due for release in April 2026, this powerful documentary shows the struggle against an establishment at the heart of government.

**"ACTION IS NEEDED
TO APOLOGISE AND
COMPENSATE THESE
FAMILIES BEFORE NO
VETERAN IS ALIVE TO
SEE IT"**

Daniel Everitt Lock explains that "this documentary aims to bring the gigantic travesty of injustice to the world, to put it into the public

eye, and make people aware of not only the impacts that nuclear weapons have on our future, but what they have already had on our past."

Campaigners are using the lived experience of the veterans to show the destructive power of nuclear weapons, articulating what they have seen, what they felt and what they still feel today. In 2027, it will be 75 years since Operation Hurricane, the first British nuclear detonation. Action is needed to apologise and compensate these families before no veteran is alive to see it.

CND CONFERENCE 2026: SAVE THE DATE



Join us on **Sunday 4 October 2026** to have your say at CND's AGM and Policy Conference.

Monday 27 July:
deadline for nominations for directly elected members of CND

Council and officers; deadline for ordinary resolutions.

Tuesday 1 September:
Deadline for amendments and special (constitutional) resolutions.



**Campaign
for Nuclear
Disarmament**

020 7700 2393
enquiries@cnduk.org
cnduk.org

The Green House,
Ethical Property,
244-254 Cambridge Heath Rd,
London, E2 9DA