

The UK Nuclear Nightmare - An Awakening

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Region: [Europe](#)

In-depth Report: [Nuclear War](#)

At last the Armageddon nightmare which is the existence of nuclear arsenals is exploding into the UK's political consciousness. At last the magical word 'deterrent' which is supposed to automatically kill dissent is being examined and unmasked as the delusion by which the paranoid silence that still small voice. The voice which says it is a crime against humanity to prepare to incinerate a large part of the world's population and risk triggering a global nuclear war.

It started with the Scottish Independence movement and now the abhorrence of these vile instruments of genocide is manifesting in Wales. In England the reckless imperial posture in the Westminster bubble has not yet been overthrown. Both Conservatives and Labour want a like-for-like replacement when the existing nuclear fleet ends its working life in the late 2020s, while the Liberal Democrats want to downsize to three submarines! But more and more of the public have other ideas. They want a world ban as has been achieved for the other weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological.

Scotland

On September 18th, 2014 the Scottish people voted on whether to remain as part of the United Kingdom of Britain. The prospect of Scotland going its own way caused a panic among the power elites of Westminster. A prime driving force in Scotland was the people's loathing of nuclear weapons and their anger at having the Westminster government's nuclear submarines dumped in the river Clyde near Glasgow. The Scottish government has pledged to remove and permanently ban nuclear weapons from Scottish territory within the first term of an independent parliament.

The Ministry of Defence had no backup plan and removing the submarines to England would be a financial and logistical nightmare. Even if it were possible to move them to the estuary of the Mersey, Tyne or Wear it seems unlikely that the local English people would greet them with open arms. The prospect of the Scottish people ridding themselves of this 'Sword of Damocles'¹ caused panic in other establishment quarters besides the political. Vice-Admiral McAnally, a former commandant of the Royal College of Defence Studies, said there is "every possibility" Britain could be forced into unilateral nuclear disarmament². Good. The UK would then be honouring its commitment under the Nuclear Non-proliferation treaty and become an example to the nuclear states of the world. Although the Admiral did not see it this way!

On this occasion the majority of the people of Scotland decided not to split with England. However since then the membership of the Scottish National Party has massively increased. The matter of a split with England will be back. There is a limit to what people will tolerate and it is intolerable that the Scottish people have these foul instruments of Armageddon

dumped in their territory by a fearful and deluded elite in Westminster.

Wales

It was rumoured that the Westminster nuclear government will get themselves off the hook by moving their arsenal from Scotland to Wales. They got a rude awakening. Speaking the day after the world marked 70 years since the end of the holocaust, a senior peer in the Welsh Plaid Cymru government, Lord Wigley, declared that the Welsh government would be 'tremendously opposed' to shifting Westminster's nuclear arsenal from Faslane in Scotland to Pembrokeshire in Wales.³ In An effort to emphasise the horror of what was being proposed he compared the effects of a Trident submarine to those of a Nazi death camp. When it was suggested that the move would have the benefit of bringing jobs to Wales he pointed out that '*No doubt there were many jobs provided at Auschwitz*' but '*..you have to consider the nature of the work and not just that a job exists*'. Quite so. There are 5000 people employed at the UK's Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston. Surely they would be happier building machines for sustainable energy than for Armageddon. He was unequivocal about the Welsh position saying "'We believe that Trident shouldn't be renewed and we most certainly don't want that renewal to happen in ...Wales'.

England

A vast number of citizens in England as well as in Scotland and Wales want no truck with threatening the world with genocidal weapons if our 'vital interests' are threatened. And in England, too, many are organising to ensure that finally sanity will prevail.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Action AWE organised the knitting of a seven miles long peace scarf which was first stretched between Aldermaston and Burghfield, the government's two nuclear weapons-building factories then used to wrap the Ministry of Defense building in London⁴.

In spite of the vast resistance to spending 100 billion pounds of citizens money on the instruments of Armageddon, the House of Commons (containing the purported 'Representatives of the people'), on 20th January 2015, in its Pied Piper, follow the leader, whip-obeying habit, voted 364 to 37 to obey their power elite bosses and replace the UK government's nuclear arsenal (250 MPs, including the Labour leader Mr Milliband, abstained).

Trident renewal will be a big issue at the forthcoming election in May. Citizens are sick of being told there is not enough money for the National Health Service, schools, decent housing, and social services when the Westminster bubble is spending 36 billion pounds a year on the arms services, building billion pound aircraft carriers and already spending billions of the 100 billion they will spend for Trident in spite of the fact that the final go-ahead is not to be given till 2016. At the same time The Bulletin of Atomic Scientist has just moved the hands of the 'doomsday clock' to 3 minutes to midnight. Only three minutes left of 24 hours to step back from the nuclear brink.

The Churches

On 7th July, 2014, the World Council of Churches issued a 'Statement towards a Nuclear

-Free World'. Included in the statement are the following paragraphs:

'Nuclear weapons cannot ... be reconciled with real peace. They inflict unspeakable suffering with blast, heat and radiation.... Their power is indiscriminateAs long as nuclear weapons exist, they pose a threat to humanity.'

'Nuclear strategy... demands an unequivocal commitment to use the weapons and nuclear history is rife with accidents, miscalculations and near-disasters.... even one nuclear detonation would overwhelm the emergency services of any country in the world. The only way to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again is to eliminate the weapons themselves.'

The pope sent a message to a recent conference in Vienna, attended by more than 150 governments. The purpose of the conference was to advance public understanding of what is now called the "catastrophic humanitarian consequences" of any use of the 16,300 nuclear weapons possessed by nine countries. Pope Francis declared "*Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence.*" He called for a worldwide dialogue, "*to ensure that nuclear weapons are banned once and for all to the benefit of our common home.*"The pope's stand was supported by a remarkable Vatican document, "Nuclear Disarmament: Time for Abolition".⁵

On May 2010, The Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group, published its Defence investment policy'. Its recommendations included that national investing bodies should exclude from their investments'

'Any company involved in the production or supply of indiscriminate weaponry (defined as nuclear weapons, anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, chemical weapons or biological weapons),..'

And

Any company involved in the production, processing, supply or storage of weapons-grade nuclear fissile materials, with no turnover threshold to be applied⁶.

In September 2014, Baptists Together, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church reiterated their call for the abolition of Trident ⁷.

The Quakers have always opposed Trident. They urge citizens to persuade the government to abandon the replacement of Trident and promote a nuclear weapons-free UK ⁸.

The Quaker position was made clear at their 'Meeting for Sufferings, 1955, 'Quaker faith and practice' as follows:

"We believe that no one has the right to use [nuclear] weapons in his defence or to ask another person to use them on his behalf. To rely on the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent is faithless; to use them is a sin."

The Way Ahead

As ever more citizens wake up to the way they are disempowered by the present power elite system the more they will realise that our democracy needs to be, and can be, updated from 19th century thinking to 21st century possibilities. We vote about every four years and thereafter we are in the hands of a small group of individuals for the decisions which govern our life. With modern technology every citizens could be given an electronic vote on every important issue and decision. This is the way forward. The software has already been developed⁹. It only remains for citizens to ensure it is adopted. Democracy means rule by the people. With each citizen given the opportunity to vote on each vital issue democracy will truly have arrived.

In the meantime to rid ourselves of this curse each of us can work alone by lobbying government and helping to inform the public, join one of the very many open membership organisations like the Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (CND), or express our support for such think tanks as The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) whose primary aim is to identifying opportunities for all states to take credible, stabilizing steps towards sustainable nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Do not be discouraged by the power of vested interests and governments with their own agenda. The American anthropologist Margaret Mead famously declared *'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has'*.

Notes:

1. President JF Kennedy declared "Today, every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us'.
2. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/10701826/-Scottish-yes-vote-will-force-Britain-to-abandon-nuclear-weapons.html>
3. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2930099/Peer-sparks-fury-comparing-UK--nuclear-deterrent-AUSCHWITZ-amid-claims-ministers-considering-moving-weapons-Wales.html>
4. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/defence/-article4333751.ece>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfXb9ObRenw>
5. http://www.esquire.com/blogs/politics/The_Pope_And_The_Bomb
6. <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1376267/defence%20policy%20may%202010.pdf>
7. http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CFA/171/#trident/*
8. <http://www.quaker.org.uk/dont-replace-trident>
9. <http://www.democracyos.org>

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