

ACTION FOR PEACE

Spring 2026 | Issue 126



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- The I.C.J. ruling (30 years on)
- Yorkshire's role in the Iran War
- Local group revival plans
- Dates for upcoming Hiroshima & Nagasaki vigils

LATEST NEWS

Our campaigning over Spring spanned from a powerful protest at Lakenheath to showing our solidarity with unions at May Day marches, UCU Congress, and Banners Held High festival in Wakefield. We've also been pleased to see local groups work with others in their area to develop a stronger network of peace groups e.g. through the setting up of Bradford Peace Forum. Wider afield, **we've supported National CND demos at Fairford and outside the Russian and US embassies.** Continuing our campaign work has been important for a variety of reasons that broke in the news. Our protest at Lakenheath, to highlight the potential new presence of US nuclear weapons on UK soil, was aptly timed with the sudden announcement that planes leaving the base were being used to commit war crimes in Iran. We discovered this following news from the IRGC that **a US fighter jet shot down by Iran came from a British base in Suffolk.** We've also faced a defence spending review, with the government facing pressure to cut welfare to fuel war spending. With a new prime minister on the horizon, we need to emphasise how Britain needs genuine security and well funded public services, not a new arms race.

For GDAMS (The Global Day of Action on Military Spending), we joined the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign (MHAC) for a walk around Menwith Hill and a protest outside the base. A video of this is now available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTsigHN2wi4>

At the end of April, CND supporters held the first of two protests calling on Russia and the US to meet their disarmament obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Together, Russia and the US possess 90% of the world's nuclear arsenal. We believe they can begin to meet their obligations by restarting the New START Treaty which expired in February. We are increasingly concerned by the high levels of tension, including Russia conducting some of the biggest nuclear exercises in years, involving 64,000 people to drill its forces in "the preparation and use of nuclear forces in the event of aggression". This CND protest aligned with **the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference happening in New York.**

Yorkshire CND was happy to be at the UCU Congress in Harrogate last week. It was great to see Sophie Bolt from National CND take part in an excellent fringe



meeting. Following this meeting, **CND signed DED_ucation's statement opposing the Defence Universities Alliance (DUA), which aims to strengthen links between arms companies and universities.**



The DUA is a new Ministry of Defence initiative launched in April 2026, seeking 20 founding university members to create a strategic network between UK higher education institutions and the defence sector. The alliance aims to build a "more strategic relationship between defence and academia" with three core objectives: advancing defence research, promoting defence careers, and fostering industry partnerships.

There was a screening of 'Our Planet, The People, My Blood' in Bradford and Sheffield. There are plans for more screenings in the near future, so keep an eye out for more information!

Coming up, we are working with local groups to organise Hiroshima and Nagasaki vigils. If you would like to discuss organising one in your local area, please let us know. You can either email (info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk) or call the office (01274 730795)

Regarding nuclear power, there's been a variety of updates and deals made. Rolls-Royce secured nearly £600m in UK government cash to develop small reactors and the Bill Gates-backed Type One Energy joined a push for the UK's first commercial fusion plant. Britain is also expected to start selling the mini nuclear reactors, developed by Rolls-Royce, to Sweden. **Following the election of the Senedd, there has been some hope for anti-nuclear campaigners in the region** due to the stance of the Plaid Cymru. However, the First Minister has been pressed over Welsh Government support for Wylfa small modular reactors and there remains some concern due to the First Minister's personal opinion on nuclear power, alongside there being no overall majority in the parliament.



Beyond Yorkshire, protesters gathered outside the UK parliament to demonstrate against the Crime and Policing Bill, which will give the **police powers to ban repeat protests.** Tighter restrictions have also been put in place regarding the

use of sound system equipment. Still, we persevere!

CND campaigners went to the RAF Fairford demo on 25th April. RAF Fairford, from which huge US bombers loaded with 2,000lb bombs have been carrying out twice-daily bombing raids on Iran, is central to the US illegal war. Despite government statements, it can give no guarantee that these raids have not resulted in war crimes.

Britain has now overtaken Russia as the world's third largest spender on nuclear weapons, according to the latest nuclear weapons spending report by International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

Britain spent £9.6 billion on its nuclear weapons in 2025, an increase of 17% on the previous year.

This spending includes:

- Operating costs of Britain's current four Vanguard nuclear-armed submarines.
- Building the replacement to Vanguard, the Dreadnought submarine.
- Maintenance of Britain's nuclear weapons stockpile.
- Development of a new nuclear warhead, Project Astraea.
- The costs don't include the 12 F-35A nuclear-capable fighter jets that the government announced it was purchasing in June 2025.

We also discovered that US officials have "signalled openness" to expand the number of countries where US nuclear-capable bombers are stationed in Europe. At present, US bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Britain are all cleared to host dual-capable aircraft (DCA) like the F-35A, as well as nuclear bombs like the B61-12.

The expansion of a nuclear presence across Europe concerns us deeply, especially following the announcement that **Finland voted by a margin of 125 to 61 to lift the country's longstanding ban on nuclear weapons**. In the build up to this vote, there were numerous protests and we encourage you to support the peace movement in Finland during this difficult time.



THE I.C.J. RULING ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS (30 YEARS ON)

BY COLIN ARCHER

Most readers will be aware of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which more than half the world's governments have now signed. It is an important and powerful tool in our worldwide campaign. But how many people know of the related international efforts that preceded it?

The use of international law to limit warfare has a long history. The horrors of WW2 gave rise to the Nuremberg Principles, the Geneva Conventions and other instruments, primarily aimed at protecting civilians. The judgement of the London Nuclear Warfare Tribunal (1985) drew on all this and more in its condemnation of nuclear weapons from a legal standpoint. It also included the proposal of seeking an Advisory Opinion on the nuclear question from the World Court. Over the following decade hundreds of activists around the world developed a campaign under the title 'World Court Project' to persuade the UN General Assembly to refer the issue to the ICJ. This massive effort was finally successful.

The Court's ruling on Nuclear Weapons was delivered in mid-1996. It was a positive, though ultimately an imperfect, judgement:

[extract] "The threat or use of nuclear weapons would be generally contrary to the rules of international law...However...the Court cannot conclude definitively whether [they] would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defence, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake."

Despite a very detailed and impassioned Dissenting Opinion by Judge Weeramantry, the Opinion was dismissed out of hand by the nuclear-armed states. But the way the law protects non-combatants could no longer be ignored in the nuclear field – and with it the imperative of global abolition.

If you would like to learn more about this, please visit our website (by scanning the QR code below) to read Colin Archer's full article on the international efforts of the World Court Project that led to this ruling.



HOW YORKSHIRE HELPS THE US WITH THE IRAN WAR

BY DAVE WEBB

At time of writing, we do not yet know if there is a lasting agreement of any kind between the US and Iran to stop or even pause the war. However, we do know that Keir Starmer has allowed Donald Trump to use British bases to launch his illegal bombing attacks, on the grounds of self-defence but allowing US nuclear-capable bombers to fly from RAF Fairford to back up an illegal first strike is difficult to justify. And there are other US bases in the UK that have had an important role in the Iran War that we don't hear so much about, and both are in Yorkshire.

You may or may not have seen a report published in March by The Times that revealed how a UK radar is playing a critical role in helping the US detect Iranian missile launches. The radar involved is at RAF Fylingdales on the North Yorkshire Moors, a few miles from Whitby. Fylingdales has provided tracking data and ballistic missile warning for the US since 1963. In 2003 the US requested that Fylingdales be upgraded to be part of its National Missile Defence system and the upgrade was eventually completed in 2007. Fylingdales is now part of Trump's Space Force and the Times reported that the radar has been actively involved in Operation Epic Fury from the start.

The powerful radar beam at Fylingdales can be scanned to cover 360 degrees at an angle of elevation from 3 to 60 degrees - with a stated range of just over 5,500 kms - and so could detect and track mid-range ballistic missiles reaching altitudes of several hundred kms or more above Iran some 4400 kms or so away. The missile tracking data can then be used to calculate the possible type of missile and their likely impact location. Any friendly troops in the area can then be notified and any possible interception methods maybe initiated.

Information from Fylingdales is transmitted to the Space Delta 2 (responsible for space domain awareness) and Space Delta 4 (missile awareness) wings of US Space Systems Command, an important part of Space Force's Space Warfighting Architecture.

Fylingdales cannot detect actual missile launches and is notified of these by information supplied by US satellites. The US Space Based Infra-Red System (SBIRS) of satellites detect the heat flashes of rockets during their launch phase and passes on information quickly to other parts of the missile defence network (such as Fylingdales).

If US Space Command cannot receive information from SBIRS satellites directly, because the satellites are positioned on the other side of the Earth, then communication links with ground-based stations are used to relay the

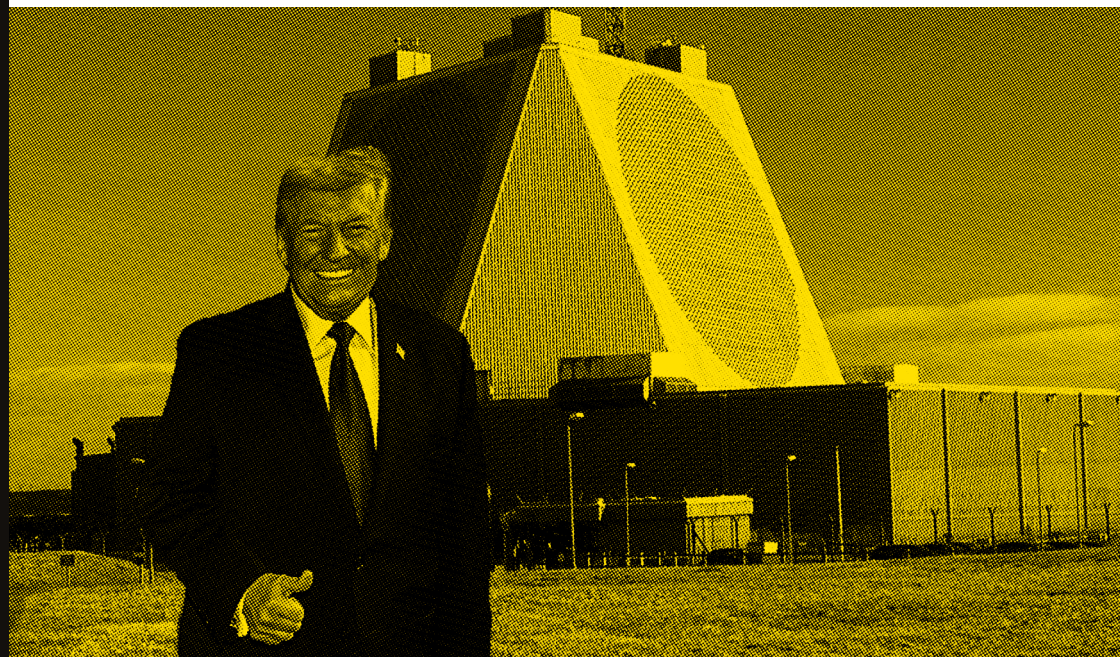
information onward. In 1996 it was announced that Menwith Hill, the US spy base just outside Harrogate in North Yorkshire, had been designated as the European Ground Based Relay Station for SBIRS.

Menwith Hill also plays another role of course - its major function is to intercept electronic communications by mobile phones, emails, etc. for the National Security Agency of the US and to search for possible information that may lead to the targeting of installations, groups or individuals considered to be a threat.

So, US military satellites detect the heat generated by missile launches, transmit the information (via Menwith Hill) to US Space Command and the Fylingdales radar accurately determines their trajectories, helping to determine likely impact zones and providing data for possible interception.

The Times also reported that, before the initial US strikes, space and cyber commands had already attacked and hampered Iran's ability to communicate and respond. This has become standard in modern warfighting methodology. The report also refers to the growing importance of space-based warfare capabilities. Major General Paul Terence Tedman, until recently commander of UK Space Command, described space as the "central nervous system" of modern military operations, playing crucial roles in communications, targeting, and weapons guidance at rapid speeds. The US military refers to this integrated system as a "kill chain," a concept being expanded through new initiatives such as a UK "digital targeting web."

It is worth remembering that Iran's first response to the US attack was to destroy key US missile defence radar installations at bases in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and UAE. The attacks were mainly by one-way drone systems. Fylingdales and Menwith Hill were too far to be attacked in this way this time.



HIROSHIMA&NAGASAKI VIGILS

Bradford

6th August (12pm-1pm) - Norfolk Gardens (behind the Town Hall), Bradford, BD1 1UH

Sheffield

6th August (1pm) - Tudor Square, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield, S1 1DA

Huddersfield

8th August (12pm) - Market Place, Huddersfield City Centre, HD1 2AN

Calder Valley

8th August (2:30pm)- Wavy Steps, Packhorse Bridge, 11-13 Old Gate, Hebden Bridge, HX7 6EN

Leeds

9th August (10:30pm) - PARK SQ, LEEDS, LS1 2ND

**For more information, please contact: info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk
More events can be found on our website: yorkshirecnd.org.uk/events**

LOCAL CONTACTS

Youth & Student CND (Yorkshire Region) – sam@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

Huddersfield Peace Group - fairbankcharles@gmail.com

Leeds CND – leedscnd@gmail.com / dave@space4peace.org

Keighley – tridentsylvia@gmail.com

MHAC (Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign) – mail@themhac.uk

Grassington & District Peace Group – strand@hawkswick.net

Sheffield CND – richardbakewell@yahoo.co.uk

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Calder Valley CND – kathypitt725@hotmail.com or Catherine on 07980 291478

