

PEACELINE



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‘Full Spectrum Power’ and Nuclear Weapons: The Government’s Plans

Last June the government was hard put to fund its £180 billion 10-year military equipment programme to support ‘power projection at distance’. There was talk of Britain’s assault ships facing the axe. The Prime Minister was twice asked to confirm that Britain would remain a ‘tier one’ military power. She wouldn’t. Labour’s defence spokeswoman criticised her, saying that Labour would ensure Britain’s ‘tier 1’ status.

But Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson ‘put his boss right’, telling a Washington meeting “Britain is a major global actor. We’ve always been a tier 1 military power and we always will be a tier 1 military power”. So ended the ‘debate’.

What ‘tier 1 status’ means isn’t clear. But being a ‘full spectrum power’ means being able to carry out the ‘full spectrum’ of military operations, from nuclear war through ‘overseas power projection’ to ‘peacekeeping’. The U.S. has it in abundance. Britain and France have ‘mini’ versions of it. Keeping and extending that is what the ‘debate’ was about.

During 2018 the new British ‘super’ aircraft carrier Queen Elizabeth, “the largest and most powerful vessel ever constructed for the Royal Navy”, did pre-service trials.

In April 2018 the new British naval base in Bahrain in the Persian Gulf opened inside the American base there - across the water from Iran. Three other UK air and naval facilities are being set up in the region.



In September Gavin Williamson announced that Britain’s assault ships were ‘safe’ from cuts.

In December Williamson wrote that it was “our moment to be that true global player once more”. He said it was time to reverse the 1960s policy of withdrawal from “east of Suez” - the Indian Ocean and the Far East. He planned to establish new British bases there and in the Caribbean.

On 11 February 2019 Williamson went further, saying Russia was “resurgent” and China was “developing its modern military capabilities”.

He said it was “a world of spheres of influence and competing great powers. The very character of warfare itself is changing. The boundaries between peace & war are becoming blurred. We and our allies must be ready to use hard power to support our global interests. Britain has its greatest opportunity in 50 years to redefine our role”. The armed forces would be “pivotal in reinforcing” that.

Britain had to “increase its global presence and build on its alliances”. It had sent forces to the Baltic, lead naval forces in the Mediterranean and flown fighters over the Black Sea. British forces were present “from the North Sea to the South Pacific”.

But “we must be willing to go further. In an era of ‘Great Power’ competition we cannot be satisfied simply protecting our own backyard”. Britain had the world’s 5th highest military spending and was its 2nd largest arms exporter. And “since the new Global Great Game will be played on a global playing field, we must be prepared to compete for our interests and our values far, far from home”.

He said Britain had to build on its relationships around the world.

From this spring six British navy vessels would be permanently

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based in the Gulf. The first operational mission of the Queen Elizabeth 'super-carrier' would be to the Pacific with a joint force of British and U.S. aircraft aboard.

"Our string of bases" would be used "to consistently project power".

Nuclear weapons form the 'back-stop' to full spectrum power. Williamson said Britain's new nuclear-



missile submarines would be delivered on time and £4 billion a year would be spent on Britain's nuclear weapons to ensure they were good for "for another 50 years".

Williamson announced a plan to develop new "strike ships" to form the core of two new naval "Strike Groups", one in the Indo-Pacific and one operating around Europe. The head of the navy called this "a dramatic increase in the range, mass and lethality of forces that can be projected from sea to land, delivering decisive military effect anywhere in the world, at a time of our choosing".

Williamson's plans build on what's already been started. The British army and airforce have exercised with their Japanese counterparts while four British warships have visited there in less than a year. At the same time British warships have joined the US-led challenge to Chinese claims in the South China sea.

Until the 1960s Britain had large aircraft carriers and bases in the Middle and Far East. In 1966 the

Opposing the DSEI Arms Fair 10-13 September 2019

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson boasted that Britain has the world's 5th highest military spending and is its 2nd largest arms exporter. Those things are closely linked.

DSEI (Defence and Security Equipment International) is

one of the world's largest arms fairs.

Organised in co-ordination with the government's Defence and Security Organisation, it has been held every 2 years since 2001 in the 2nd week of September at the huge ExCeL exhibition centre in London Docklands.

From the beginning there have

been protests against the holding of DSEI. In 2017 the setting-up of it was challenged by a week of daily blockades and creative protest.

The shape of this year's events has yet to be decided, but they will build on the history of opposition.

Protests can have dramatic results:

they drove one arms fair firstly out of Cardiff to a public arena at Birmingham and then from there to a closed government establishment at Farnborough!

London CND will be organising publicity and support for the DSEI protests among CND groups around Britain.



government announced withdrawal from 'East of Suez' and the end of large British aircraft carriers. In 1971 the Bahrain and Singapore bases were closed.

The 'return to East of Suez' is a 'return' under very different conditions: Britain's new 'super-carriers' were designed to be 'very useful' to the United States. Their first operational mission will carry a joint U.S. and British force. They need foreign, mainly U.S., warships to escort them. And the British base in Bahrain is tucked inside a giant American one. Similarly, the missiles which carry British nuclear warheads are rented from the U.S. Navy stockpile.

Williamson says "we and our allies must be ready to use hard power to support our global interests". That builds on 20 years of 'readiness to use hard power' and its consequences in Yugoslavia,

Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and other places.

But new clashes involving the 'use of hard power' are increasingly likely to be with nuclear powers Russia and China.

Williamson and the government think that "a world of spheres of influence and competing great powers" in which "the boundaries between peace and war are becoming blurred" is not to be opposed. Rather it is "our moment to be that true global player once more" in the "new Global Great Game" by building forces of "increased range, mass and lethality".

What is striking is that the great mass of people have no voice in these plans at all. The only public 'debate' over them took place between the Prime Minister and her Defence Secretary over a few weeks last summer.

Jim Brann

USA pulls out of the INF treaty

What it was it and why it was significant

The Intermediate range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty was between the USA and the USSR and was signed by Reagan and Gorbachev in 1987. The treaty prohibited the possession, production or testing of a land-based missile with a range 500 - 5500 km. Prior to the treaty, both sides were preparing to fight a nuclear war in Europe. Both sides had nuclear weapons dispersed across the continent, notably the cruise missiles based at Greenham Common. This treaty stopped this dead, and by time it was fully implemented in 1991, 2600 nuclear warheads had been withdrawn from Europe.

The treaty a “zero option”. Initial negotiations had talked about limiting the weapons to a few hundred on each side. Then Gorbachev made a global zero option proposal – do away with all nuclear missiles. Reagan said “no”, but accepted a zero option for the intermediate range missiles.

Why did the USA say it pulled out?

In a campaign rally for the US mid-term elections in 2018, Trump said: “Russia has violated the agreement; they have been violating it for many years. And we’re not going to let them violate a nuclear agreement and go out and do weapons and we’re not allowed to.” He also talked about China, which is not bound by the treaty.

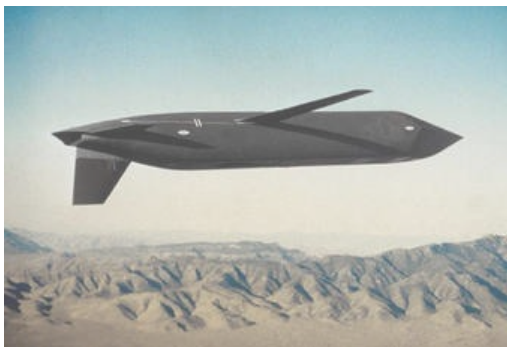
Russia denied being in breach of the treaty, and Putin has also called for the treaty to be extended to China. But talks on resolving issues got nowhere.

Trump announced on the 2nd February 2019 that the USA was suspending compliance, and gave Russia 180 days to destroy offending missiles. If they did not, the USA will pull out completely in 6 months. Russia responded by saying that they were pull-

ing out of the INF too.

Is Russia in breach?

Well, maybe. Part of the problem is the increasing standardisation of missile systems on each side. There are standard launchers into which many different types of missile can fit. Iskander is a general purpose lorry mounted missile system used by the Russian army. Air or sea launch cruise missiles are not covered by the treaty and both the USA and Russia have lots. Probably Russian cruise missiles can fit into the Iskander launcher.



The USA is also probably in breach of the treaty. The new American stealthy cruise missile has a ground launch capability as part of its specification. However, so far it is only deployed as air launched.

The USA is also probably in breach of the treaty though its Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) defences in eastern Europe. The USA has a ABM base in Romania and another under construction in Poland. The USA says that the bases are there to defend Europe from ballistic missile attack from Iran. The Russians do not believe them. The ABM bases have standard missile launchers, which take anti-missile missiles, but they can also take cruise missiles – in breach of the INF treaty. All this is technical stuff – neither side has been preparing to fight a nuclear war in Europe. The problems could have been solved by negotiation, if there were good will. It appears that there is none.

Perhaps it's all about China

China is not a party to the INF. Worse still, China seems to have a technological lead in hypersonic cruise missiles. Following the collapse of the INF,

both the USA and Russia announced that they would develop ground launched hypersonic cruise missiles.

At an arms fair in Guangdong in 2018, China offered its lorry mounted hypersonic missile system for sale! Significantly for the USA, these systems are virtually undetectable, but can hit a ship up to 1000 km from the Chinese coast.

Consequences for future treaties

The New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) was signed by Obama and Medvedev in 2010 and became effective in 2011. This treaty limits the number of strategic nuclear delivery systems and warheads on each side. This is the latest in a succession of nuclear weapons limitation treaties going back to SALT 1 (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) signed by Nixon and Brezhnev in 1972. New START is due to expire in 2021.

In February 2018, Trump told Putin that New START was "one of several bad deals negotiated by the Obama administration". No talks are being held on its renewal, and Putin has called for it to be extended unchanged for another 5 years. John Bolton, Trump's National Security Advisor, called for New START to be abandoned before talking office. He is now holding a review within the Trump administration on whether or not it should continue. The abandonment of the INF does not bode well.

Russia is very concerned about American ABM systems. A treaty to limit such systems was signed by Nixon and Brezhnev in 1972, but the USA withdrew in 2002. The Aegis ABM system that the Americans are deploying in eastern Europe is widely regarded as ineffective, but the Russians are not convinced that such systems will always be ineffective. In response to the INF pull out, Putin reminded the Americans that the Russian strategic doctrine remains Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) and that any effective ABM system will be countered by more offensive weapons.

David Leal

Coming Events

Local CND Group Events

Bromley Borough

1st Saturday every month • 2.30 - 4.00pm • Leafleting • Fri Apr 26 • Noon – 3.00pm • Chernobyl Day stall by Bromley Market Square mural; annccgarrett@yahoo.com for details

Tower Hamlets

Thu Mar 14 • 7.30-9.30pm • AGM with guest speaker Bruce Kent; at Kingsley Hall, Powis Street E3

Wimbledon

Every Friday • 6-7pm • Vigil for Peace at St. Mark's Place, Wimbledon. Has been held for 16 years. Info: Maisie, 020 8001 5167

Other Events

Tues Mar 12 • 11am • Christian CND Embassies Walk; Meet at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Sq. Visit Embassies of nuclear-weapons and non-nuclear states; 3 routes - join for a single visit or the whole route; All faiths and none welcome. 020 7700 4200 christians@cnduk.org

Sat Mar 16 • Noon • "No More Fukushimas" March on Parliament for 8th Anniversary rally. Meet outside Japanese Embassy, 101 Piccadilly W1 • **2-3.30pm •** Rally in Old Palace Yard, opposite House of Lords rememberfukushima311@gmail.com

Sat Mar 16 • Noon • "No Racism; no Fascism" day of international action. Assemble noon in Park Lane W1. Org. Stand Up Against Racism. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2013107605418593/>

Sat Mar 16 • 2.30-5.30pm • Musical Protest against the Arms Fairs held at the ExCeL exhibition centre; Musicians and non-musicians welcome. From Custom House DLR Station follow the signs to ExCeL or go to Prince Regent DLR. Action at end of the walkway just before you get to the entrance to ExCeL; www.elaaf.org

Tue Mar 19 • 7-9pm • Public Meeting: "The continuing effects of the

Fukushima Disaster" with 3 mothers from Fukushima and Dr. Ian Fairlie. Hosted and chaired by Caroline Lucas MP. In Committee Room 9, House of Commons. Entry at St. Stephen's Tower entrance. (Allow 20 minutes to go through security.) Free. Info: <https://kicknuclear.com/>

Wed Mar 20 • 7pm • "Remember Fukushima": film screening and talk by Fukushima mothers; Room B104, Brunei Gallery, SOAS (opposite main entrance), off the north-west corner of Russell Square, WC1. Org CND. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1503536093114824/>

Wed Mar 20 • 7:30pm • "This Evil Thing" Michael Mears' one-man play about WW1 conscientious objectors. www.facebook.com/thisevilthing Followed by discussion with Michael Mears and Haringey WW1 Peace Forum. Free. At Park View School, West Green Rd, Tottenham, N15 3QR.

Fri Mar 29 • 7.30pm • Croydon TUC screening of 'Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade.' Q&A with the director and a meeting of the Croydon Peace Network. Tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/film-shadow-world-tickets-57521480296>

Sat Apr 6 • 10:30 • Uniting for Peace AGM • **Noon - 17:00 •** UfP Spring Conference: "Global Problems Need Global Solutions"; at Wesley's Chapel, 49 City Road EC1Y 1AU. Vijay Mehta - vijay@vmpeace.org / Brian Cooper - 0131 446 9545

Sat Apr 6 • 2.30-5.30pm • Musical Protest against the Arms Fairs held at the ExCeL exhibition centre; Musicians and non-musicians welcome. Custom House DLR Station and follow the signs to ExCeL. Action at end of the walkway just before you get to the entrance to ExCeL. www.elaaf.org

Tue-Thu Apr 9-11 • CAAT Appeal Court legal challenge at the High Court in the Strand against 2017 ruling that UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen are legal.

<https://www.caat.org.uk/resources/countries/saudi-arabia/legal-2016> Supporting vigil outside? Info: 020 7281 0297 enquiries@caat.org.uk

Wed Apr 10 • 6.30pm • "Greenham Women Everywhere." Celebrating the Greenham Common Peace Camp. Speakers: Kate Kerrow and Rebecca Mordan. At Library Education Room (Lower Ground Floor) LSE Library Portugal St. Free. 020 7955 7229 library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk.

Thu Apr 25 • 7.30pm • "A Mozart Evening" at St. James's Church, 197 Piccadilly W1 9LL. Musicians for Peace and Disarmament Chamber Orchestra. Interval speaker; Fabian Hamilton MP, Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament. Nearest tube: Piccadilly Circus. All proceeds go to peace movement organisations info.mpdconcerts@gmail.com

Wed May 1 • Noon • May Day march from Clerkenwell Green to rally in Trafalgar Square. Speakers include John Mc Donnell MP; Faringdon tube <http://www.londonmayday.org/>

Regular events

Every Wed • 6-7pm • Women in Black silent vigil against militarism & war; Edith Cavell Statue, St Martin's Pl WC2; wibinfo@gn.apc.org

Every Fri • 10am-12.30pm • Vigil in solidarity with Japanese activists against nuclear power; Outside Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly. Green Park Tube **1-1.30pm •** Vigil at Tokyo Electric Power Company offices, 14-18 High Holborn (Chancery Lane tube); Info: David 020 7700 2393; www.kicknuclear.com

2nd weekend each month • Women's peace camp at Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Factory; 07969 739 812; www.aldermaston.net

1st Sun each month • 10.55am • Walk in Peace; Slow, silent 1-hour walk for peace; Speakers' Corner café, Hyde Park (Marble Arch tube); Clare 020 8755 0353; beatrice@bmillar.com