



# ABOLITION 2000

GLOBAL NETWORK TO ELIMINATE NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
NO NUKES, NO WAR

## Webinar – Preserve the INF Treaty

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Coming in at this stage, of course, most things have been said, or a lot of stuff has been said already. I'd just like to bring a European context to this, and much of what I was going to say has been said, but I'll go through some important aspects, as far as we see it in our campaign here in Europe.

The proposed withdrawal of the US from the INF has been supported by NATO foreign ministers, here in Europe and elsewhere. And they've joined in and declared that Russia has developed a system that violates the INF. And they say it's now up to Russia to preserve the INF Treaty, but of course they don't mention the establishment of the US and NATO missile defence bases in Eastern Europe, which has been a problem seen by Russia for many years now: the interceptor missiles in Romania. And along with that there are these very powerful radar systems in Turkey, in the UK and in Norway that are operating as part of that system.

So the withdrawal and destruction of this treaty is seen as being extremely serious by us in Europe and threatens a new dangerous arms race that brings us even closer to the possibility that nuclear weapons will actually be used and the disastrous consequences that that would have on all life on the planet.

We can also see President Trump's programme to build and deploy a new generation of nuclear weapons – supposedly of low yield and therefore more usable in the near future – and billions of dollars are being spent on this programme. And even though they're called low yield, they could be as powerful, if not more powerful than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And these have been seen, by Europeans anyway, as being a possibility for being stationed in Europe. I know Pavel says that he doesn't think that's likely, but it's certainly a great concern to us in Europe, because where would these short-range, more usable nuclear weapons be based but somewhere close to their possible targets like Russia or China i.e. in Europe?

And so we are soon to be faced, possibly, with the threat of a return to the situation where the US plans to station short and intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe so as to limit any future nuclear war there. Thus leaving the US mainland relatively untouched.

Now, whether this is part of US strategy or not, of course, I don't know, but this is the way it can be seen, and is being seen, by many observers in Europe. So we in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, we're calling on both Russia and the US to fully comply with the terms of the INF. Threatening to withdraw from that treaty, rather than proposing negotiations to resolve the outstanding issues, is extremely dangerous. It's a vital treaty which has ensured the destruction of nearly 2,700 short and medium-range missiles and has played a crucial role in ensuring that US missiles are not situated in Europe.

We also see the treaty as part of a trend in the way that President Trump has been working, part of a wider pattern of US disengaging from essential international nuclear agreements and treaties. President Trump has pulled the US from the Paris agreement on climate change, and last year the US withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which aims to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, in return for the lifting of sanctions imposed by the UN, US and the European Union. The US has now imposed new sanctions, although the others involved have stayed committed, more or less, to the deal.



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And that's not all of course. The US withdrawal from the INF treaty also calls to question whether Washington will work with Moscow to renew the New START treaty in 2021, which is due to expire. The New START treaty signed in 2010 limits the number of nuclear warheads of both Russia and the US, and this treaty is therefore fundamental for preventing a global arms race and ensuring nuclear de-escalation.

If we add all of this to the commitment of all the nuclear weapons States who upgrade their nuclear weapons' arsenals, even though this is in contravention of the 1968 nuclear non-proliferation treaty which requires those that have signed it, the P5 nuclear States, to engage in nuclear disarmament, we find a situation that's reminiscent of the situation at the height of the Cold War in the 1980s.

In 1979 there was the decision to deploy US cruise and Pershing missiles in Britain and several other Western countries. At the same time the Soviet Union was deploying its new SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe. 108 Pershing IIs in West Germany and 464 cruise missiles across Western Europe were due to be deployed: 160 to the UK, 112 to Italy – this is cruise missiles – 96 to West Germany, and 48 to Belgium and the Netherlands each. 96 of those cruise missiles were scheduled to be stationed in Greenham Common, in December 1983, and another base, Molesworth, was to house 64 cruise missiles by the end of '96. Now, many of you will obviously have heard of Greenham Common and perhaps also of Molesworth.

These cruise missiles were mounted on road vehicles and left their base on regular exercises. Cruise Watch was established, which was a network of protesters. This was formed to track and harass the cruise convoys wherever they went. Because of the scale of the determination of the protests, the convoy soon had to have large police escorts and only left the camp under cover of darkness.

Now at this time, I'd emphasize that there was a great feeling of unease throughout Europe about the political situation and the possibility of a nuclear war. It was engaging a lot of people in the protests. Thousands of people took part in protests in Britain and around Europe over these particular missiles. I don't see that we're in that kind of position at the moment where we can mobilize huge numbers of people on the same scale.

So for example in December 1982, 35,000 women joined hands around Greenham Common base. In March of the following year, in 1983, after a speech by Ronald Reagan in which he called the Soviet Union "the Evil Empire", 70,000 protesters formed a 14 mile chain from Aldermaston, which is the place where the bombs are created in Britain, to Greenham Common. So, this is a large number of people participating in the protests. That went on to an even bigger protest, in terms of women's protest, at Greenham Common. This has become legendary.

Not only were people protesting about the nuclear weapons there, but also questioning the society that could create and sustain such weapons. All kinds of questions were being asked, all kinds of answers were offered about how we might move forward, and about the kind of society we want to create.

50,000 women surrounded Greenham Common in December 1983. The day started as a silent vigil where women held up mirrors to allow the base to symbolically look back at itself and its actions. However, the day ended with hundreds of arrests as the women pulled down large sections of the fence.

In 1984 a rainbow village was established and occupied at the so-far unfenced airfield at Molesworth, which was due to receive cruise missiles as well, and in February of the following year, in 1985, the British government had had enough of the protests and 1,500 troops and police were deployed to remove the



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peace camp at Molesworth; this peaceful group of people who had been camping there for some time in protest at the establishment of the nuclear weapons there.

It was highlighted by the fact that the Minister of Defence at that time, Michael Heseltine, was seen to be wearing a flak jacket like he was in full battle gear, along with the troops, and gleefully invaded the peaceful camp there.

The cost of the operation to clear the fence around RAF Molesworth was of the order of six and a half million pounds. So this was causing an awful lot of problems for the government. It was observed by President Gorbachev that people throughout Europe were not happy with nuclear weapons. They wanted to get rid of them. And of course this led to him and Ronald Reagan getting together in Reykjavik and putting together the INF treaty.

Eventually in 1992, Greenham Common was returned to the UK, and now there are not many traces left of the cruise missile base.

We believe that Britain actually has an important role to play in this particular crisis. It should be encouraging a diplomatic solution to the crisis rather than fanning the flames that can lead to nuclear war. Standing by and allowing crucial nuclear arms control agreements to be torn up places the whole world in in great danger. How many times are we going to actually get away with the threat that the existence of these weapons of mass destruction, of mass murder, even poses? We have managed to scrape through so far, but for how long can we continue along this path?

In 2017, the United Nations adopted a historic international treaty banning nuclear weapons which was supported by 122 countries. The new treaty will make it illegal, when it comes into force under international law, to develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess, stockpile, transfer, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. It also makes it illegal to assist or encourage anyone to engage in these activities. The nuclear weapon states have refused, of course, to participate in this process so far, instead releasing a statement attacking the treaty. But many of their citizens are very much in favour of such a treaty and want their governments to sign.

While nuclear weapons exist, we are never safe from a military disagreement escalating into nuclear war. The international community must now really lend its weight to the argument that the INF must be saved. We need an outcry on this such as we've not seen for many years. For it could be Europe that will host these missiles, once again, and bear the military brunt, but the problems will undoubtedly extend far beyond the continent.

The UK has a crucial role to play in this. Whatever special relationship exists with the US must now be utilized to save the treaty and prevent a disastrous descent into a new nuclear arms race based in Europe.

In actively reducing nuclear stockpiles the treaty has been an important step towards nuclear disarmament. While the geopolitical and technological situation is much different today than from the Cold War era during which it was written, it remains essential to maintaining global security, and certainly the feeling that's developing among citizens in Europe is one of urgency that something is done about nuclear weapons.

Urgent action is needed now. We have to work together to make sure that our calls for a safer world are heard.



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Part of the above was a statement that CND issued to try to safeguard the INF treaty, and I think it does require for us to work together, throughout Europe, throughout the world, to show that we've had enough of these weapons. Previously the INF treaty came about because mainly of the force of the will of the people, and we have to produce that force once more. We have to be there and show our governments the way forward.

So that's it from me. Thank you.