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# KINGSTON PEACE NEWS

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## US prepared to nuke China in '58, papers reveal

### Revelations as Biden heads for new 'Cold War'

The US under Joe Biden has done little to damp down the anti-China rhetoric of the Trump era – something that was obvious at last month's UK-hosted G7 meeting and the American president's follow up visit to NATO. This has been occurring as new evidence has emerged as to just how close Washington came to authorising a nuclear strike against China in 1958 in defence of anti-communist forces on Taiwan.

Celebrated whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg – whose release of the 'Pentagon Papers' 50 years ago famously exposed the US administration's duplicity over the Vietnam War - has now disclosed documents hitherto unseen by the public.

He told *The New York Times*, which has published his latest revelations, that he was doing so now because of renewed tensions between the US and China.

#### Millions would die

The *Times* reported that American military leaders pushed for a first-use nuclear strike on China, accepting the risk that the Soviet Union might retaliate in kind on behalf of its ally and millions of people would die. The crisis arose at a time when Chinese Communist forces were planning to attack islands in the Taiwan Strait in their ongoing campaign against the nationalist stronghold of Chiang Kai-shek.

The US government published a report on the conflict in 1966 but the specific reference to a nuclear attack plan remained classified. It is these pages that Ellsberg, now 90 years old, has released. Present day commentators have said the new information serves to act as a warning of an escalating confrontation with China over Taiwan. The US continues to supply the island with arms and senior US officials have visited there in recent years. In 1958, officials doubted whether the US could successfully defend Taiwan with conventional weapons. Since then China has grown exponentially in military terms and now rivals the US as an economic superpower.

This, commented *Guardian* columnist Rafael Behr, was behind President Biden's view that

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#### US Veterans count the cost

In the last four years, the official US government estimate of the number of veterans who die by suicide averages 17 a day says the latest Veterans Affairs report. A Veteran is 1.5 times more likely to take their own life than a non-Veteran. <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2020/2020-National-Veteran-Suicide->

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# US prepared to nuke China continued from Page 1

the G7 nations he met in Cornwall in early June should be co-opted into a new Cold War against China. The message was pressed home when he then visited NATO headquarters in Brussels before a follow-up trip for his first presidential meeting with Vladimir Putin.

Behr argues that such a meeting with the Russian leader, apart from re-setting relations between the country that were so unhinged by Trump, actually flatters Putin by the pretence that Russia, despite its still formidable arsenal, is still a superpower. Washington, argues the columnist, views Russia as a declining force.

## Marked contrast

This is in marked contrast with the White House's view of China, an actual economic powerhouse that is seriously threatening America's global dominance. Hence the importance for Biden of enlisting the support of G7 nations in backing the US's anti-China rhetoric, even though the EU and individual nations such as Germany are involved in substantial trade deals with Beijing, also to the US's annoyance.

Britain's position in all this is different, and worrying. Biden takes a dim view of Brexit,

writes Behr, which is seen as "a pointless sabotage of European unity." The White House preferred Britain as a pro-US voice wielding influence inside the EU. Since that is no longer the case, Britain under the present government is more subject than ever to US economic pressures and Johnson is particularly keen to be viewed as America's ultra-loyal friend. That means toeing a hawkish line on China.

This has influenced the Government's decision to send a naval force, headed by the brand new aircraft carrier, off to the South China Sea in a highly provocative and destabilising show of force.

Kate Hudson, CND general secretary commented: "How well this demonstrates the Government's warped priorities: spending vast sums on sending a warship halfway round the world while many British children don't have enough to eat and the NHS struggles to bear the pressures of the pandemic. This is a provocative voyage that should be called off. Our government needs to end the military posturing and work with all in the global community to meet the enormous challenges we face."

## Don't start a cold war, warns Bernie

The US's most popular independent Democrat senator Bernie Sanders has issued a warning about Washington's burgeoning hostile attitude towards China.

In an article for the website *Foreign Affairs* on June 17 entitled *Washington's Dangerous New Concensus on China*, subtitled *Don't Start a New Cold War*, Sanders argues that the current attitude towards the world's most populous nation is markedly different from the one that prevailed just two decades ago when the US, both political parties and corporations, was keen to open up trade with China in the belief that this would liberalise both the Chinese economy and its political system.

Sanders was one of the few voices opposing this at the time, he explains in the article. "What I knew then, and what many working people knew, was that allowing American companies to move to China and hire

workers there at starvation wages would spur a race to the bottom, resulting in the loss of good-paying union jobs in the United States and lower wages for American workers. And that's exactly what happened."

And he goes on: "In the roughly two decades that followed, around two million American jobs were lost, more than 40,000 factories shut down, and American workers experienced wage stagnation—even while corporations made billions and executives were richly rewarded."

Now, China is viewed no longer as a market but as a threat, economically and militarily. But, argues Sanders, if the US now organises its foreign policy around a global confrontation with China it will fail to produce better Chinese behaviour and be politically dangerous and strategically counterproductive. A better way forward

is to work with all wealthy nations to raise living standards around the world, to tackle economic inequality and thereby undermine the simplistic populism of authoritarian forces. Sanders praises the Biden Administration for deciding to provide 500 million Covid vaccine doses to poorer countries and for backing an international intellectual property waiver that would allow poorer countries to produce the vaccines themselves.

And in a telling phrase he comments: "When people around the world see the American flag, it should be attached to packages of lifesaving aid, not drones and bombs."

*(The full article can be found at the website [www.foreignaffairs.com/articles](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles) There is a paywall but it is possible to access at least one article free of charge. Ed)*

## Remembering Harald



Richmond & Kingston Palestine Solidarity Campaign branch secretary and KPC member Harald Molgaard died a year ago and an event celebrating his life is being organised by the PSC and will take place in August or September as Covid restrictions permit.

Harald (*pictured above in sun glasses*) was a committed campaigner for justice for Palestinians, for peace and for green issues. The event will feature Palestinian music and food.

Richmond & Kingston PSC is raising money for a children's library to be built in Gaza in Harald's name. You can **find out more and donate** to the fund by visiting <http://bit.ly/HaraldLibrary>

You will also find there a wonderful video recounting Harald's work and including contributions from residents in Hebron plus film of some street activism locally, with a few familiar faces in evidence!

Hundreds of people, men, women and children, were killed and vital infrastructure has been destroyed, when the Israeli forces carried out a brutal bombardment of Gaza during May, making the ongoing humanitarian crisis even worse.

An investigation by CAAT and *The Independent* **has exposed the role that UK-made military equipment has played in the bombing campaign.**

Israeli forces used advanced F-35 fighter jets throughout the attacks. 15% of the value of each aircraft is made here in the UK, with arms producers boasting that 'the fingerprints of British ingenuity' are vital to the warplanes. Reports also point to the use of F-16 fighter jets and Apache helicopters, both of which include UK-made components and have played a key role in the bombing. To help CAAT continue this and other campaigns you can make a donation. Go to <https://caat.org.uk/donate/>

# My Summer Holidays or drowning in promises

by Mary Holmes



KPC is such an excellent organisation that members don't leave when, like Harry Davis, they move to Australia. I have just been staying with another far-flung member, Ailsa Johnson, who lives near Land's End in Cornwall. Pretty near Carbis Bay, too, where the G7 were recently spending a few days. I had a lovely time but I also felt it was good that there were so many protesters there to emphasise the need for action not just promises, on climate change, vaccines and other issues.

We were told that the whole Carbis Bay area was surrounded by a ring of steel and I guess it was, but this really worked in the favour of demonstrators. It meant that except for a few privileged journalists inside the ring there were masses of reporters and photographers on the outside looking for events and photos for their TV programmes and newspaper articles.

There were more police than I've seen for many a year but they seemed quite happy for us to march and demonstrate and roads were not blocked. The warships off-shore looked a bit threatening but of course were just there to ensure that when ministers were interviewed they could be seen in the background so the UK arms industry could take advantage of a

marketing opportunity.

Climate change and what to do about it was one of the main themes of the summit. Protesters were calling for "deeds not words". On the first day we joined XR and a throng of larger-than-life jellyfish, a whale's skeleton, mysterious other-worldly blue figures, samba bands and lots of XR banners waving in the breeze, and walked down the hill, through St Ives and across a beautiful stretch of golden sand to reach as near as we could to the G7 enclosure. We sent a delegation to put our views to the leaders but they were not allowed anywhere near them.

The next day we joined groups calling for justice for people in parts of the world suffering conflict and repression, including Yemen, Kashmir, Tigray and Palestine and many other places. G7 countries may say they want peace but they include some of the major suppliers of the weapons that fuel conflicts.

On Sunday we were back with XR and events which ended with the world leaders, with large plaster heads, standing in the sea (*picture, above*) being confronted by women with DROWNING IN PROMISES

written on their backs.

“What difference does it make if you protest?” people sometimes ask. I feel this was just one example where the protesters were able to join critical commentators in the media to provide a vital counterweight to what would otherwise have been a series of smiling photo opportunities with sun and sea in the background and world leaders congratulating themselves on their wise decisions. I think it’s always important that whatever the cause there are people prepared to come out in public and say what they believe to be right. So leaders can’t say “nobody cares”.

## Peacefulness deteriorates

Peacefulness throughout the world has deteriorated slightly in the past year, the ninth year in the past 13 where this has been the case.

This is the conclusion of the Global Peace Index, produced annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace.

The organisation amasses worldwide data that records societal safety and security, ongoing domestic and international conflict, and militarisation.

The last year’s results show a deterioration in peacefulness measured as 0.07% with 87 individual countries improving and 73 getting worse.

Conflicts that emerged in the past decades were largely abating but new tensions were arising, in the latter case some driven by the COVID pandemic. In fact some 5,000 pandemic-related violent events were recorded between January 2020 and April 2021.

Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world and Afghanistan is the least peaceful for the fourth consecutive year, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan and Iraq.

The largest regional deterioration was felt in North America and takes account of the violence and civil unrest that followed on from the contested results of the US presidential election among other indicators.

Perhaps ironically the region where peacefulness had improved was the Middle East and North Africa, although the annual report covers the period ending in April 2021, prior to the Israel-Palestinian conflict this May.

**Did you know** that the United States celebrates National Whistleblower Appreciation Day every July 30?

This year marks the 243<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of America’s first whistleblower law passed on that day in 1778 during the American Revolution. It was passed after ten whistleblowers reported wrongdoing and abuses committed by a superior officer in the fledgling Continental Navy.

The first National Whistleblower Day took place in a room in the US Senate in 2015 and the day has been celebrated since then by the National Whistleblower Centre founded as a non-profit organisation by lawyers who represented whistleblowers in both commerce and the military.

## Cancel culture?

A row has erupted over how school textbooks should characterise the conflict between the Israeli government and military on the one hand and Palestinians on the other.

The British government has warned schools to ensure a balance in presenting opposing views of the conflict that claimed 250 lives in May – the vast majority of them Palestinian – and which sparked a wave of classroom protests.

But, reported *The Guardian* last month, teachers may struggle to comply with the Government’s strictures because the only exam board to offer curriculum material on the subject and a GCSE history option has now withdrawn its two textbooks because of complaints that they were favourable to the Palestinians!

### Board of Deputies

In October 2019 publishers Pearson first withdrew a textbook because of complaints from the Board of Deputies of British Jews and UK Lawyers for Israel. When a revised edition appeared in 2020 it was criticised by the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine.

A report on the revisions in the book – compiled by two leading academics on Middle East History - has found that of the 294 most recent changes the vast majority favour the Israeli point of view. UK Lawyers for Israel claim the report is biased against Israel.

Historians fear that fewer and fewer students will have the chance to understand the roots of one of the world’s most continuous conflicts.

# British-Israeli policy left behind by US?

As the British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab was visiting Israel after the Gaza ceasefire and talking about the need to break the cycle of violence that could burst out once more if nothing were done to address the causes of the conflict, the UK ambassador to the United Nations was voting against allowing the UN to hold an inquiry to “investigate the underlying root causes of the conflict.”

This turn of events followed Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s earlier decision to withdraw UK support for the International Criminal Court’s investigation into possible war crimes by Israel and Hamas.

The vote on a UN-led inquiry passed with 24 votes in favour, nine against and 14 abstentions. Most European countries decided to abstain. Over recent years the UK has become the Israeli Government’s most dedicated defender among the 27 states that make up the UN Human Rights Council, a body that the US boycotts. In 2019 the UK declared that it would vote against any motion critical of Israel, regardless of what was said.

## Obstinacy

However, at a time when the UK continues to demonstrate its obstinacy on this issue it is in danger of finding itself on the wrong side of a growing body of progressive opinion in the United States. A groundbreaking examination of an alternative option for Israeli-Palestinian peace has been published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the US/Middle East Project in a detailed study called *Breaking the Israel-Palestine Status Quo*.

The initiative was described in a recent article in *The Independent* by journalist Patrick Cockburn. The proposal, he wrote, is for a rights-based approach, notably freedom for the Palestinians from dispossession and discrimination and the assertion of their right to freedom of movement. The aim would be to confront and reverse what the Israeli human rights organisation B’Tselem and Human Rights Watch have denounced as a system of apartheid that enforces inferior status on Palestinians.

But has this approach any chance of finding favour generally in the US? Well, the study points out that this rights-based approach “has

the benefit of being more consistent with the Biden Administration’s overall foreign policy posture”. It would, writes Cockburn, foster greater sympathy in the US with both Democrats and anti-Trump Republicans. He also notes a “radical shift” in opinion in much of the US media, such as the influential *New York Times* that carried on its front page pictures of each of the 67 Palestinian children killed in Gaza in May.

## Even-handed

There is also an “intelligent, even-handed documentary on the origins and course of the Israel-Palestinian conflict” called *The Tinderbox* by film-maker Gillian Mosely now doing the rounds.

It might also be in relationships with Palestinians rather than the Israelis that the Biden Administration could do some good without, it is argued, spending much political capital in the US. Cockburn writes that the US should stop pretending that Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, who has not held an election since 2005, is a truly representative figure with whom to do business. The White House should instead support the democratic election of real Palestinian representatives.

The removal of Netanyahu, albeit by another right-wing Israeli politician, could also be an important development.

## Equal numbers

Cockburn argues that everywhere between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, an area where Israeli Jews and Palestinians live in equal numbers – some seven million each, the US should support a solution based firmly on equal rights and which opposes the subjugation of one community by another. It needs to roll back on some of Trump’s measures and also not attempt to revitalise a moribund peace process based on “moth-eaten clichés – a two-state solution” which nobody believes in and which has become a discredited charade.

More than 60 million people in 59 countries continue to be threatened by landmines and other unexploded ordnance. In 2018, landmines and other remnants of war killed or injured 6,897 people.

# A church that rose from the atomic ashes

Just a short walk from Hiroshima main station close to the epicentre of the atomic explosion that destroyed the city on August 6, 1945 stands a cathedral that quite literally rose from the ashes of that terrible day.

The Church of the Assumption of Mary, more generally known as the Memorial Cathedral of World Peace, stands on the site of the former Noboricho Parish Church that was destroyed in the bomb blast. The church's German pastor, the Revd. Hugo Lassalle was wounded in the blast but survived and became determined to rebuild the place of worship as a beacon of peace. In 1948 the clergyman became a naturalized Japanese citizen and took the name Enomiya Mabiki.

Having gained the blessing of Pope Pius XII, Enomiya-Lassalle, a Roman Catholic, collected contributions from around the world to obtain the funds needed to build the new Memorial Cathedral. An architectural competition was organised and, despite attracting 177 designs, failed to produce a winner. At this stage Japanese architect Murano Togo, who was a judge on the original panel, took on the work himself and even waived his fee. The construction began and was completed on 6 August 1954.

Specific gifts from overseas included a pipe organ from Cologne in Germany and an altar of black marble from Belgium. Other donations came from Spain, Portugal and Mexico.

The style of the cathedral is a mix of western modernism with Japanese flourishes. The stained glass windows, for example, feature typical Japanese motifs of bamboo, pine, and plum blossoms.

## Significance of the bricks

Of particular significance is the fact that the basic construction method of a post-and-beam concrete frame with internal panels is reminiscent of traditional Japanese architecture as are the shapes of the windows penetrating the tower. However, the brick infills within that frame were made from earth containing ashes from what was left of the original church, the area surrounding it, and perhaps even local people obliterated when the atomic bomb exploded.

The church is the hub of Catholic life in Hiroshima and Mass is said in Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog (Philippines) and English underlining the fact that it is a place of peace for all nations.



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## *Diary dates*

### *Sunday 11 July*

Cook along and support Palestine. 11am to 1pm. Don't miss this chance to learn about the customs around the holy celebration of Eid featuring Palestinian chef Maha Salah! This event is raising money for PSC's vital campaigning work, and is co-hosted by Zaytoun CIC. In this cook-along, Maha will be guiding us through the process of making traditional Palestinian Ma'moul. A dessert pastry that is traditionally eaten during Eid celebrations, you will have a chance to make date and pistachio stuffed versions of this delicious dessert! Donations £20? Enrol at <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/events/online-cook-along-kaek-el-aid/>

### *Monday 12 July*

Christian CND hosts a major Zoom meeting as part of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations. 7pm. The event was originally scheduled to take place in Methodist Central Hall, the location of the historic first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly which saw the very first resolution passed to call for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The replacement Zoom event includes the following speakers: Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE – leading theologian and Methodist Minister, Marie Dennis – Pax Christi International Senior Advisor, Bruce Kent and Valerie Flessati. Free. Register at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0vdeuqgDkvGde-0Cc5Ja7UPEGHcTdlvMi1>

### *Friday 9 August*

London CND will host a Hiroshima commemoration event in Tavistock Square, London, and online. Time to be advised. The event will be co-hosted by Catherine West MP and London CND co-chair Hannah Kemp-Welsh. Speakers and performers will include a representative of the fast at the Ministry of Defence, Reverend Nagasi from the Battersea Peace Pagoda and Hugh Goodacre on the guitar. Jeremy Corbyn MP to be confirmed.

### *September 14-17*

DSEI arms fair in East London. Protests being co-ordinated by Stop Arms Fair. Further info <https://caat.org.uk/challenges/arms-fairs/dsei/>

## **Obituary – Mary Sandling**

Activist Mary Sandling, whose obituary appeared recently in *The Guardian* was, in addition to her other attributes mentioned in the article, a member of Kingston Peace Council. She lived in Northcote Road, New Malden.

The obituary records that Mary, who was 93, was an activist, a civil service librarian and, late in life, a clown! Born in Birmingham she attended Tiffin Girls School, Kingston, and then went to Bristol University to study drama. Through her compassion for animals, Mary had become a vegetarian during the Second World War. She was concerned about human rights abuses, and after graduation worked for Amnesty International for a period, continuing to support them actively for many years, as well as working for Paul Elek Publishers. In the mid-1960s she studied librarianship at the North Western Polytechnic, London. During this time there was a major flood of the River Arno, and Mary travelled to Florence with fellow students to join the team working on flood damage to the rare books.

She then became assistant librarian in charge of the Architects and Buildings library, part of what was then called the Department of Education and Science. In 1972 Mary married Frank Sandling, a local government draughtsman, and they settled in New Malden.

In the early 1990s, a few years after her husband had died, Mary attended a performance of the theatrical event called Snow Show and her fascination led her to enrol in clowning workshops. In 2000, at the age of 72, Mary was recruited by the theatre company Peepolykus to join their troupe.