

## British Pugwash Newsletter: September 2023

### Items include:

1. Webinar: Reducing nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear war
2. Videos of recent webinars / Joseph Rotblat documentary
3. Russia-Ukraine war: publications / materials
4. British Pugwash annual report
5. Recent articles and reports of interest
6. Student and Young Pugwash update
7. Obituary: Professor Edward (Ted) Cocking

---

### 1. Webinar: Reducing nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear war

**Date / Time:** 18 October 2023, 1400-1530 GMT

**Speaker:** Professor Steve Fetter, University of Maryland

**Topic:** The invasion of Ukraine by Russia significantly increased the possibility of nuclear use and continues to be a subject of grave concern. The Doomsday Clock, which marks the threat of global catastrophe, is at the closest point to midnight it has ever been. At this most dangerous of times, it is vital that nuclear risk reduction, arms control and disarmament are revived.

In this talk, Prof. Steve Fetter will review US nuclear weapons policy across administrations, especially in relation to the current conflict in Ukraine, and consider how Washington can reduce nuclear risks. He will also reflect on emerging technology and strategic challenges at a time of rising international tension, and how scientists and the public can get involved in these issues.

Following the talk there will be a Q&A.

To attend, please [register here](#)

### 2. Videos of recent webinars / Joseph Rotblat documentary

- Anatol Lieven: ['The Ukraine War- A European Tragedy.'](#) British Pugwash Annual Lecture, Hay Festival, 4 June

A year on from the start of the Ukraine War, journalist and policy analyst Anatol Lieven explores the conflicting goals of Russia, the United States and Ukraine, argues that Europe needs to take responsibility for its own security, and looks at ways in which the war might be brought to an end.

- ['Nuclear risk: and how we can work to reduce it'](#), 23 May

This webinar introduced the dangers posed by nuclear weapons, how physicists have mobilised to contain them, and the challenge to prevent their use in a multipolar world where the risk of proliferation is increasing and current nuclear-armed states are modernizing their arsenals with little regard to the new threats posed to or by these weapons.

Speakers: Dr David A Ellwood and Dr Peter Collecott

- Professor Sir Hew Strachan: [2023 Annual Lecture](#), 9th May

Mindful that the 1955 Russell-Einstein Manifesto, which inspired the launch of Pugwash Conferences, highlights the threat to humankind's survival posed by war in a nuclear age, Honorary Patron of British Pugwash, Professor Sir Hew Strachan, explored what the invasion of Ukraine tells us about war, deterrence and escalation.

- ARTE.TV documentary on Joseph Rotblat: [‘The Strangest Dream’](#)

Polish physicist Joseph Rotblat left the prestigious team of scientists working on the Manhattan Project and devoted his life to the fight against nuclear weapons, organising the Pugwash conferences to encourage scientists to meet and reflect on the role of science in society. This is the portrait of a man who swam against the tide of history and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995.

### 3. Russia-Ukraine war: publications / materials

The following Pugwash groups have produced materials on the Russia-Ukraine war to improve understanding of the conflict, propose diplomatic solutions, and highlight ways to reduce nuclear risks:

- Canadian Pugwash: <https://britishpugwash.org/peace-table-for-ukraine-and-russia/>
- International Pugwash: <https://pugwash.org/2023/06/11/2nd-pugwash-meeting-on-next-steps-to-restore-us-russian-arms-control/>
- British Pugwash:  
<https://britishpugwash.org/july-2023-update-nuclear-weapon-use-risk-in-ukraine/>  
<https://britishpugwash.org/nuclear-weapon-use-risk-in-ukraine/>

### 4. British Pugwash annual report

The contents of the annual report for 2022 include:

- Developments in 2022 (Nuclear arms control / Chemical and Biological weapons / Climate change)
- Projects (Student and Young Pugwash / Peace Jam / Nuclear risk reduction / Climate change)
- Meetings and events (Including on: the Ukraine conflict / the nuclear non-proliferation treaty / nuclear energy)
- Internal developments (Membership / Executive Committee)

Download the report [here](#)

## 5. Recent articles and reports of interest

Hans Kristensen / Matt Korda, [Federation of American Scientists](#), Increasing evidence that the US Air Force's Nuclear Mission may be returning to UK soil

Stephen Chen, [South China Morning Post](#), US nuclear submarine weak spot in bubble trail: Chinese scientists

Stephen Chen, [South China Morning Post](#), China has tamed the world's most powerful explosive, military scientists say

Paul Meyer, [The Globe and Mail](#), Putinheimer and the spectre of nuclear war

Theresa Hitchens, [Breaking Defense](#), Beyond bullet on bullet: Northcom's new defense plan looks to kills missiles before they launch

[No First Use Global](#), NPT States parties call for No First Use policies

Martin Filler, [New York Review of Books](#), Oppie's Problem

Lawrence Wittner, [Counterpunch.org](#), Oppenheimer's Tragedy- and ours

[State.gov](#), Statement on the US completing the destruction of its Chemical Weapons Stockpile

Toby Dalton / Ariel Levite, [Arms Control Association](#), AUKUS as a nonproliferation standard

[Securitycouncilreport.org](#), Iran: Non-proliferation briefing

Anatol Lieven, [Responsible Statecraft](#), Putin: Disastrous by indispensable for the system he created?

Elena Chernenko, [Kommersant](#), If only it didn't come to nuclear winter

[Neglobal.eu](#), New study finds strong public support for advanced nuclear energy

Fiona Cunningham, [Arms Control Association](#), The Unknowns about China's nuclear modernization programme

[Arms Control Association](#), Remarks by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan

Tong Zhao and Dmitry Stefanovich, [American Academy of Arts and Scientists](#), Missile Defense and the Strategic Relationship among the US, Russia and China

[Tass.com](#), CFE Treaty now entirely obsolete, Russian diplomat says

[Straitstimes.com](#), The Godfather of AI leaves Google and warns of danger ahead

Mark Fitzpatrick, [Stimson.org](#), How Israel's Nuclear Monopoly Affects Proliferation in the Middle East

## 6. Student and Young Pugwash update

Andrea Gil has left her post as SYP coordinator- we thank her for her contribution and wish her well as she returns home to Canada.

Recent podcasts:

1. Nuclear diplomacy: <https://britishpugwash.org/new-syp-podcast/>
2. Iran and Ukraine: <https://britishpugwash.org/syp-podcast-second-episode-is-out-now/>
3. Russian nuclear weapons and the Ukraine conflict: <https://britishpugwash.org/new-podcast-episode/>

## 7. Obituary

Professor Edward (Ted) Cocking FRS (26/9/1931 - 14/7/2023) was a member of British Pugwash for twenty years. His daughter Sarah sent us this obituary "in her Dad's memory".

After an unconventional education during WW2 which involved being evacuated to Cornwall from central London and being taught by monks, Ted started a lifelong fascination with science and particularly with nitrogen fixation in plants. He developed this into becoming a leading scientist in this field and was respected around the world for his academic achievements, working at Nottingham University for over 63 years and well into his eighties. He was a humble but much respected and liked colleague, who mentored many students and colleagues over the years with kindness and enthusiasm, many of whom went on to achieve success in the UK and around the world. He will be very much missed by his family, friends and colleagues, but he was an eternal optimist and would want everyone to continue to follow his motto in life and "Let us travel hopefully."