



British American Security
Information Council

2014 Activities Report

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, BASIC prioritised its further engagement in building trust and dialogue amongst opinion-formers and decision shapers working in areas of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation and disarmament. Our long-term vision remains a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. Achieving this requires an open approach: one that takes into account not only a full range of perspectives, but also looks at the issue within the context of constructing holistic sustainable security approaches.

Much of 2014 was overshadowed by the Ukraine crisis, with relations between Russia and NATO more strained than at any time since the Cold War. Russia was already resistant to further arms control measures beyond the negotiation of new START on the basis that the United States was developing new military technologies that could only be balanced by Russian nuclear capabilities, and that there was an inexorable advance of economic and politico-military influence from NATO and the EU up to Russia's borders. Russian nuclear threats, both in statements and in scaled up nuclear-capable manoeuvres, have dented ambitions for arms control and disarmament in recent months.

More positively, negotiations between Iran and the E3+3 (P5+1) countries were extended in an effort to reach a comprehensive deal by the new deadline of 30th June 2015 – there remains optimism around a deal after the bones of a framework agreement was announced in April. The strategic turbulence in the Middle East could do with some good news on this front.

The governments of Mexico and Austria each hosted large intergovernmental conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in 2014, as states attempt to create new avenues to break the deadlock on multilateral nuclear disarmament.

In the UK, we published the *Trident Commission's* final report after three years of deliberation on the future of the UK's nuclear weapons program. This reflects the opinions of the Commissioners themselves, rather than BASIC as an organisation, but it re-enforced BASIC's inclusive reputation for engaging in the nuclear debate on the grounds of national and global security in a manner respectful of those coming from different perspectives.

In the United States, our *Next Generation* project, launched in September, is intended to refresh our and other group's approaches, by reframing the narrative on nuclear weapons and considering how to engage with the next generation of policy makers currently developing their positions on the nuclear debate.

Our *Rethinking Nuclear Weapons* project continued its ground-breaking research into the utility of nuclear weapons through research and roundtables hosted in New York and London. In the Middle East, we engaged with new partners to expand the dialogue on strategic threats, non-proliferation and the prospects for a WMD-free zone.

There are many challenges facing BASIC and its agenda but we continue to adapt to remain relevant and effective.



Trevor McCrisken

Trevor McCrisken
Chair, Board of Trustees

ABOUT BASIC

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) is an independent transatlantic organization promoting effective global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and transatlantic security. We look to a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons, formalized in negotiated treaties established by a cooperative global security agenda. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are inseparable. They are both essential to global security, and to greater international trust and confidence. We engage with decision-makers in a constructive manner and promote public awareness by addressing the critical decisions facing leaderships that are relevant to these issues.

BASIC has charitable status in both the UK and US, with a small but committed staff, an active network of influential board members, advisers, and patrons on both sides of the Atlantic, working to a common purpose. We look to develop and use our established reputation as a respected and trusted independent source of information, ideas and perspectives in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. We aim to do so by facilitating informed dialogue and debate in an inclusive manner that is at once realistic and transformational, and addresses security concerns directly. We are focusing our efforts on encouraging everyone to engage with an open mind in the search for more sustainable global security.

BASIC does not seek to establish a detailed platform of policy objectives behind which it gathers partisan support, but rather seeks to reach across the political and geographical divides that prevent open and genuine communication of perspectives, in the interests of reaching progress on its agenda. We will ensure that our public statements and publications are sensitive to this approach. We seek to:

1. Work with people of diverse opinion to develop practical and attractive alternative approaches that can achieve progress toward sustainable nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament;
2. Communicate effectively through BASIC research papers and reports, comment pieces, blogs and other media in a manner that is open, flexible, engaging and inclusive; to promote public understanding and insight; and to foster informed debate and creative solutions that genuinely seek to address the concerns of those opposed to proposals for change;
3. Serve as a trusted source for politicians, government officials and other decision-makers as they deepen their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament;
4. Serve as a key source for media and other opinion shapers in promoting these strategies;
5. Promote active partnership within the network of international NGOs, academics and think-tanks working in this area that reaches out to the rest of Europe, Washington, Moscow, the Middle East and key nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states, by deepening our reputation as a key and unique transatlantic player with an inclusive remit within the arms control community.

ACTIVITIES

In 2014 BASIC organized several events aimed at reframing the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. We had key five program areas:

- Engagement in the UK debate on Trident, including the Trident Commission;
- Supporting non-proliferation and prospects for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East;
- Reducing the role of nuclear weapons in Europe;
- Bringing new voices into the debate through the Next Generation project; and
- Rethinking Nuclear Weapons

UK Debate & Trident Commission



Reducing the role of nuclear weapons in Europe

Non-Proliferation in the Middle East



Rethinking Nuclear Weapons

Next Generation



We Hosted
22
Meetings, Panels & Events

Bringing Together
830
Participants

In
10
Global Cities

Within
6
Countries around the world

United Kingdom

Engaging in the domestic debate and hosting the Trident Commission

The **BASIC Trident Commission**, set up to review British nuclear weapons policy, met several times early in 2014 to finish drafting the most politically sensitive areas of its final report. The aim of the Commission was to inform and stimulate debate and articulate constructive improvement to current government policy. The Commission has raised BASIC's profile significantly, granting us more influence in Parliament. Most significantly, the Labour Party

leadership explicitly referred to the Trident Commission as a policy way-marker for its party's policies. The Commission publicly released their report to a cross-party audience of parliamentarians, media representatives, officials, and NGO professionals in Parliament on July 1st. This led to a flurry of media activity that week, and the report has been cited extensively in places such as *The Guardian*, *BBC News* and the *Financial Times* in the months since its release.¹

BASIC continued engaging directly in the political debate on Trident on several occasions, working closely with the members and Parliamentary Officer of the **Nuclear Weapons Policy Liaison Group (NWPLG)**.² The NWPLG engages with UK government decision shapers and encourages them to consider a non-nuclear defence strategy and concrete steps down the disarmament ladder. Together we authored a number of articles in several different political blogs and hosted private meetings with influential decision shapers over the course of the year.

Middle East

Supporting non-proliferation and building prospects for a WMD-free zone

BASIC work on **non-proliferation in the Middle East** involved events in Washington D.C., Cairo, London, New York, Dubai and Amman, addressing the objective of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East and strategies for regional states to apply greater leverage in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

To kick off the year, BASIC hosted a private roundtable in Washington D.C. on building capacity for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, placing the focus back onto discussion of substantive technical and capacity-building issues. The roundtable participants discussed proposals from a joint article by BASIC program director Rebecca Cousins and Ambassador Dr.

¹ BASIC's engagement work on the UK nuclear weapons debate, including the Trident Commission was supported by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation and the Mulberry Trust.

² The NWPLG was funded in 2014 by the Network for Social Change and the Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation.

Sameh Aboul-Enein, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister of Egypt (in his academic capacity).³

In March, BASIC hosted a conference in Cairo in collaboration with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and Cairo University, involving students, academics and policy shapers from Europe, the US, and the Middle East discussing Egypt's role and strategy in the regional and global non-proliferation regime in the lead up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister, Ambassador Hisham Badr was the event's keynote speaker.⁴

In May, BASIC co-hosted a side event at the 2014 NPT PrepCom on prospects for a WMD-free zone Conference as part of a joint Tel-Aviv Roundtable Process that began in November 2013 in Israel, alongside the Israeli Disarmament Movement and IKV Pax Christi. Featuring BASIC's Scoville Fellow Lianet Vazquez and Senior Fellow Ward Wilson speaking to a large crowd, it highlighted the diminished value of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, the challenges to the Helsinki process, and a model of change to promote the way forward.

On November 6th, BASIC and the Center for Information and Arabian-Russian Studies (CIARS) hosted the London GCC Nuclear Workshop. This private roundtable event featuring representatives from the region and civil society followed BASIC's larger conferences in 2012 and 2013 on non-proliferation in the Gulf. Nuclear safeguards, safety, and security are common interests and can be used to deepen regional dialogue and strengthen commitments to and procedures underlying nuclear non-proliferation, which in turn can provide important dividends for strategic security.⁵

Immediately following this event, BASIC and the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis co-hosted the Dubai Nuclear Workshop on November 9th. This private workshop for officials and decision shapers involved discussions of strategic and deterrence matters in the context of

nuclear energy developments in the region, and commitments by states to nuclear non-proliferation.⁶

BASIC also hosted a panel discussion entitled "Options available to promote progress in furthering NPT objectives in 2015" at the Amman Security Colloquium, a high level meeting involving hundreds of participants mainly from Arab states. BASIC's panel discussed what Arab leaderships can do to apply leverage and make meaningful strides toward a WMD-free zone in the Middle East and greater progress on the disarmament agenda as a whole.

Reducing the role of nuclear weapons Tackling tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and extended deterrence

On February 12th, BASIC hosted a panel discussion on "Extended Deterrence and Assurance" at the Exchange Monitor's annual **Nuclear Deterrence Summit**, hosted near the Pentagon. In front of a crowd of several hundred, panelists including Paul Ingram, Shumel Bar and Guy Roberts highlighted the challenges facing the United States in reassuring European and Middle Eastern partners amidst dynamic security challenges and ever-tightening defense budgets. All three participants agreed that extended deterrence cannot be taken for granted, though there was deep disagreement over whether it would continue to provide the level of assurance that has been claimed in the past.

In cooperation with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), BASIC hosted a large international workshop in Berlin entitled "Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Practice" on March 27-28th. The event took place in the context of a joint BASIC-SWP project on facilitating increased transparency and confidence-building on tactical nuclear weapons.⁷ The conference brought together 66 experts and officials from 13 member

³ This event was funded by the Prospect Hill Foundation.

⁴ This event was funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

⁵ This event was part of the project funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

⁶ This event was part of the project funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

⁷ This overall project was funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The German Federal Foreign Office provided additional financial support for this specific conference.

states of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), including from Russia, as well as NATO International Staff. Participants discussed a broad range of potential transparency and confidence-building measures that could or should be on the current and future NATO-Russia agenda by focusing on concrete and real-life historical experiences, ideas and measures.

BASIC published the last three editions of the joint newsletter “Tacnukes News” in 2014. This newsletter went out to over 2000 subscribers and covered recent developments and information on tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

Next Generation

Bringing new voices to the nuclear weapons debate and applying new thinking

Our **Next Generation** project was officially launched in September 2014.⁸ It aims to bring new voices into the nuclear weapons debate and inspire the next generation of policy shapers to broaden strategic discussion and apply forward thinking to the nuclear policy community. As background research into what young people and emerging policy makers care about, and how they communicate ideas and take action, we convened several focus groups at the Harvard Kennedy School, George Washington University, Tufts University, Georgetown University, Northeastern University (in Geneva), the School of Oriental and African Studies, University College London, and BASIC’s office in London. In total, we spoke to well over 100 students and young professionals in 2014. We are using the results from our focus groups as a road map for the non-proliferation and disarmament community in understanding ways to engage with next generation policy makers. The results will be published in 2015.

In partnership with WMD Awareness, BASIC’s **Talking Trident: A Conversation with the Next Generation** event series sought to give a voice to young people in Britain in regards to the nuclear weapons debate.⁹ This series kicked off in London with a public event in July featuring Paul Ingram (BASIC), Rebecca Sharkey (ICAN-UK), Zoe

Pelter (ORG), Paul Schulte (former MoD), and James Arbuthnot MP (Conservative) discussing whether or not nuclear weapons meet the challenges of the next generation. We took our event series to Edinburgh in September to discuss prospects for a nuclear weapons free world with Bill Kidd MSP (SNP) in front of an audience of 40 people. This event was held in partnership with the Edinburgh World Justice Festival, UNA-Youth Edinburgh, and Edinburgh People and Planet.

On June 13th in conjunction with the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and the King’s College London War Studies Department, BASIC hosted a screening of a feature length documentary about Dr. Richard Garwin, who was instrumental in the US design of the first successful hydrogen bomb, and has spent much of his career since trying to ensure such weapons would never be used. The event featured a Q&A session with Dr. Charles D. Ferguson, President of the FAS and BASIC’s executive director, Paul Ingram.

Rethinking Nuclear Weapons

Re-evaluating the utility of nuclear weapons

As part of the **Rethinking Nuclear Weapons Project**¹⁰, Ward Wilson published several reports and articles including [Debating Nuclear Deterrence](#) in the April/May edition of *Survival* and [The Age of Frustration](#) in *Foreign Policy* in November. He has a number of articles and two books in production that we expect to be published in 2015.

As director of the Rethinking Nuclear Weapons Project, Ward Wilson attended the Conferences on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons in Nayarit, Mexico in February and in Vienna, Austria in December and participated in the accompanying civil society meetings. He presented to the Austrian Institute for International Affairs and the Assemblée Nationale in Paris in June, and spoke to Scottish Parliamentarians about the Trident debate in August. He led a workshop at the IPPNW Conference in Kazakhstan in August, engaged with members of the new NSquare initiative in Washington D.C. in November, and attended the Prague Initiative

⁸ The Next Generation project is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

⁹ This event series was funded by the Nuclear Education Trust and the WF Southall Trust.

¹⁰ The Rethinking Nuclear Weapons project is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Conference at the Czech Republic Foreign Ministry in early December.

In 2014, BASIC also started an initiative to explore the links between climate change, risk and nuclear weapons. An international panel has been developing and has secured former presidents and Nobel Peace Prize winners Óscar Arias (Costa Rica) and F. W. de Klerk (South Africa) as co-chairs.

In two private roundtables, BASIC hosted nuclear disarmament discussions to complement the narrative on the humanitarian consequences that would arise from the use of nuclear weapons. The first roundtable in 2014, entitled, “A Pragmatic Consideration of the Utility of Nuclear Weapons” was held in New York in October with members of civil society, academics, and policy officials on the sidelines of the General Assembly’s First Committee. This was followed by a private meeting with officials from European states and representatives from think tanks in a “Dialogue on the Utility of Nuclear Weapons” in London in December.¹¹

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation¹²

The Clerk to the London based All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation is employed by BASIC, though the APPG activities remain independent. 2014 Meetings included:

January 22nd: “*The Interim Nuclear Agreement with Iran: what’s next?*”, Mark Fitzpatrick (IISS) and Rt Hon Jack Straw, MP

April 2nd: “*The UK’s Nuclear Future: The Trident Replacement Decision and Beyond*”, Malcolm Chalmers and Hugh Chalmers (RUSI)

May 6th: “*Mainstreaming R2P: how can the UK live up to its responsibility to protect?*”, Jennifer Welsh, (UN Special Advisor) and Jason Ralph (Leeds University)

June 11th: “*The Destruction of Syria’s Chemical Weapons*”, John Walker (FCO) and Richard Guthrie (CBW-Events)

June 17th: “*The 2014 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Prep Com and prospects for the NPT Review Conference in 2015*”, Philip Hall (FCO)

July 2nd: “*The next International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons*”, Amb Alexander Kmentt (Austria)

July 10th: “*Trident Commission findings – the concluding report*”, Prof Alyson Bailes and Lord Rees of Ludlow

October 15th: “*Iran and the Nuclear Programme*”, Dr Bruno Tertrais (FRS, Paris)

November 27th: “*Command and Control: the threat of near nuclear use*”, Eric Schlosser and Heather Williams (Chatham House)

¹¹ These roundtables were funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

¹² The APPG on Global Security and Non-Proliferation is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

OUTREACH

All of our program work and activities are anchored by external communications to reach our stakeholders and followers, keeping them abreast of our activities any progress on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda.

In 2014 we continued our regular “This Week” newsletter, and Rebecca Cousins and Paul Ingram continued to author a fortnightly op-ed on developments in the global nuclear weapons debate for the *Open Security* section of *Open Democracy*.

We released 15 publications, sent out 39 news updates and published 65 articles and blogs. We had a 34% increase in subscribers to our newsletters and followers on social media. We also got widespread attention from journalists being mentioned in international media 38 times.

Selection of BASIC in the Media

The Trident Commission was set up to stimulate debate on the UK’s decision on Trident renewal. Its final report released in July was followed by a surge of media coverage on the UK’s nuclear debate.

- [UK Independent Panel: Retain Trident Subs, But Explore Delay Options](#), by Elaine Grossman in *The National Journal*, July 1st
- [A like-for-like Trident replacement isn’t justifiable in terms of security or cost](#), by Danny Alexander in the *Guardian Comment is Free*, July 1st
- [Trident given a vote of confidence – for now](#), in the *Telegraph*, July 1st

BASIC staff and events were also featured in the media or wrote for media sources a number of times over the course of the year, including:

- Paul Ingram being interviewed in [World leaders fear Ukraine crisis will harm nuclear cooperation](#), by Julian Borger in *The Guardian*, March 23rd
- [Did Bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki Save Lives?](#) by Ward Wilson writing for *The Diplomat*, August 25th

- [The Government faces difficult questions on Trident after the election](#), by Paul Ingram in *Left Foot Forward*, October 21st

The above lists represent a sample of our media feature during 2014. A full list is available on our website: <http://www.basicint.org/press/news>

Selection of 2014 Publications

- [Building Capacity for a WMD-Free Middle East](#), Rebecca Cousins and Sameh Aboul-Enein, January 23rd
- [The Challenges of Coherent U.S. Extended Nuclear Deterrence and Assurance](#), Paul Ingram, February 21st
- [A BASIC Guide to Interpreting the Trident Commission’s Concluding Report](#), Paul Ingram, June 30th
- [Toward the 2015 NPT Review Conference: Attitudes and Expectations of Member States in the Middle East](#), Lianet Vazquez, October 2nd

The above represents a sample of our 2014 publications. A full list is available on our website: <http://www.basicint.org/issues/publications>

Selection of 2014 Articles

- [Heeding the outcomes & remaining challenges of the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit](#), Lianet Vazquez, April 16th
- [Building Dialogue: The Trident Commission and our nuclear future](#), Trevor McCrisken, July 3rd
- [Talking about Trident & the Next Generation of Global Threats](#), Rachel Staley, July 22nd
- [Iran nuclear negotiations: the final stretch?](#), Ishti Saluja, November 19th

The above represents a sample of our 2014 articles. A full list is available on our website: <http://www.basicint.org/blogs>

ORGANIZATION

BASIC wishes to extend its gratitude to our employees in our Washington D.C. office who wrapped up their time with us in late 2014. Christina (Chris) Lindborg who worked as an Analyst and Program Manager with BASIC in our Washington D.C. office for fourteen years moved on in September. Rebecca Cousins finished her time as Program Director in Washington, then later in the year took on the role of Project Director for the Next Generation project, working from our operations in Boston. We now no longer have a permanent staff presence in Washington D.C.

Roxana Cimpeanu, employed through BASIC as the Parliamentary Officer to the Nuclear Weapons Policy Liaison Group (NWPLG) moved on to work for Dods Monitoring in February 2014. Varinder Singh Bola joined the team as the NWPLG Parliamentary Officer in September 2014.

BASIC had the pleasure of hosting a Scoville Fellow Lianet Vazquez during the Spring and Summer of 2014 in our Washington D.C. office. Lianet's research focused on non-proliferation and prospects for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

We also want to extend gratitude to the interns who worked with BASIC in the Washington D.C. and London offices: Kate Nelson, Ching Fung, Maria Rivas, Mihan Borhani, Max Stenberg, and Ishti Saluja.

BASIC welcomed three additions to the transatlantic board of trustees in 2014: Alyson Bailes, former British diplomat and Adjunct Professor at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik and a Visiting Professor at the College of Europe in Bruges, specializing in security studies; Dr. Denise Garcia, Sadeleer Research Faculty and Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and the International Affairs program at Northeastern University in Boston; and Sam Walton, Peace and Disarmament Programme Manager for Quaker Peace and Social Witness.

BASIC Board in 2014

Dr. Trevor McCrisken (Chair), Associate Professor, US Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick.

Amb. Robert Barry (Secretary), former US Ambassador to Bulgaria and Indonesia, Head OSCE Mission in Bosnia (1998-2001).

William D. Hartung, (US Treasurer), Director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for International Policy

Stuart Warner, (UK Treasurer) Chartered Accountant, Lecturer, Trainer and Author

Alyson Bailes, Adjunct Professor at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik and a Visiting Professor at the College of Europe in Bruges (joined in November 2014)

Dr. Andrew Cottey, Head of Department, Department of Government, University College Cork

Dr. Denise Garcia, Sadeleer Research Faculty and Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and the International Affairs program at Northeastern University (joined in November 2014)

Amb. James Goodby, former arms control diplomat, with Brookings, Hoover and MIT (on the board until May 2014)

Elizabeth Kinder, musician, documentary maker and feature writer.

Amb. James Leonard, former US Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

Dr. Joanna Spear, Director, Security Policy Studies Program, Elliott School, George Washington University (on the board until August 2014)

Sam Walton, Peace and Disarmament Programme Manager for Quaker Peace and Social Witness (joined in November 2014)